

**Subject:** Its Not Your Fault

**From:** "St. Francis Episcopal Church" <[vicar@stfrancisva.org](mailto:vicar@stfrancisva.org)>

**Sent:** 11/19/2014 7:02:45 AM

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November 19, 2014

## Following Jesus

*... when I was hungry you gave me food ...  
Matthew 25: 35*

### ***Its Not Your Fault***

I have been reading and thoroughly enjoying Dwight Zscheile's new book *The Agile Church: Spirit-Let Innovation in an Uncertain Age*. One of the very helpful points he makes is this one:

We think that if we only worked harder, preached better, brought more energy, met people's

needs more, or found the right program or technique things would turn around. If you're thinking those thoughts and find yourself discouraged, I have a simple message for you: this cultural shift is not your fault.

We have spent some very serious energy at St. Francis looking at the cultural shifts in our society and thinking about how to respond to them. One of the challenges that will rise up is the feeling we need to try harder, add more programs, or do what other churches more successful than we are do. We keep looking ahead, though, and find that there is a more life giving way than blaming ourselves for things beyond our control. That way, however, is also challenging.

### ***The Way of Jesus***

While many of our familiar church structures no longer carry the gospel into our communities, or at least not as effectively as a generation or more ago, following Jesus does. Developing community life which encourages us to take up a lifestyle of following Jesus daily, and relating to others in our church in a way that demonstrates the gospel relationally opens up doors for extending the kingdom. We can undertake that kind of living to the point where following Jesus becomes our life. We may actually extend the kingdom in a way that has become so "natural" to us that we do not even realize we did it, like when Jesus says, ". . . I was hungry and you gave me food . . .," and we answer, ". . . when did we see you hungry . . .". You do this by:

1. Hearing what Jesus is saying to you and asking Him what He would have you do about it.
2. Being with others who are doing the same thing.
3. Serving people outside of the church with your friends who are following Jesus with you.

## **Coming Attractions**

***Sunday, November 23, 2014*** worship at 10:00am

***Wednesday, November 26, 2014***, Caritas at Christ Church at 5:00pm

***Sunday, November 30, 2014***, worship at 10:00am

***Christmas Mother*** is active during the early part of December. Contact Janice Nelson to participate [cnelson2610@comcast.net](mailto:cnelson2610@comcast.net)

### ***Centerville Circle of Prayer***

For the Precious One Family Day Home, Simone Mealy, owner, that children would have a very fulfilling time at this facility, the business would grow and the families using this service would be blessed in many ways.

### ***Diocese of Virginia***

For the congregations and clergy of Emmanuel, Alexandria; St. Anne's, Scottsville; St. James, Louisa; Holy Batesville; Incarnation; Mineral; St. Clement's, Alexandria.

***Metropolitan Richmond***

For persons in financial need in Metropolitan Richmond: For advocates who put their lives on the line for the sake of others; for all who fight for the rights of persons who cannot fight for themselves.

Grace and Peace,

John Maher

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