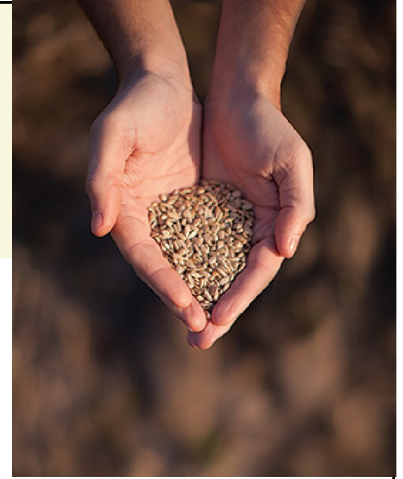


# LIVING GENEROUSLY

*Sunday, October 30, 2016*  
*Emmanuel Episcopal Church*  
*Witness by Susan Thornett*



My spiritual journey began in earnest in the chaos and turbulence of the 1970s. I remember John Lennon or Bob Dylan or someone like that said to “pick a path and go deep.” So I picked Christianity and I went deep spiritually. I found various church communities along the way, but no church home. I kept looking because of what Paul’s letters said about the primary importance of community. Somehow I knew that community was the key to this journey with Christ.

I arrived at Emmanuel Episcopal Church around 15 years ago. It was to be the end of my days of wondering. I was prone to what we in the 12-Step Programs call a ‘geographic.’ I would get so far into a church community, then run into some obstacle or disappointment and move geographically to another church. I went back to several churches more than once.

I’m not sure what I thought kept me at Emmanuel Church but eventually I surrendered. When I look back I see quite clearly that God kept me here. Grace. The church I found at Emmanuel 15 years ago is almost unrecognizable as the church we are today. It makes me think that somewhere along the way this church community surrendered to God’s grace too.

Today I am so proud of us. We engage in the difficult issues of our day full on. We’ve opened our doors and our hearts to radical change in a gentle way that allowed most of us to stay in this community on the journey forward. And allowed us to welcome newcomers authentically. One of the miracles that has changed how I view the world and others is us widening our community to include the Hawaii State Hospital. We invite the residents of our state mental hospital to worship and share a meal with us two times a year. Members of our church currently volunteer with Chaplain Jessica and Chaplain Steven at the Hospital. This is a long tradition here at Emmanuel. There are names of those we remember going up to the Hospital on Sunday evenings to worship with that community and bring refreshments.

I’m so excited about the possibilities that our future holds. I have no idea what those possibilities are but I have faith that we will continue to surrender to God. And God is the One to manifest miracles. It’s what God does! This is a church community that is alive and open to God.

And what we do is give our resources to the work we do here. It takes all kinds of resources to keep this caring growing in the world. I know it asks us to let go of our small separate little existence of fear and scarcity. I have been tithing for a number of years now and I will certainly tithe this year. I encourage you to do the same.