

# The Vintage Voice

Serving The Church Pension Fund's Family of Beneficiaries

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## God Still Speaks to Us

*The Rev. B. Madison Currin, Ph.D.*

A theme that keeps coming back in *The Vintage Voice* is how the retired clergy are continuing their priesthood. The following story, which happened to me, is my response. Even though I do not do interim work, nor do I do supply work, still God works through me in ways that continue to amaze and surprise me.

It was in late April while we were visiting my wife Eleanor's old family home at Pawleys Island, SC, that an amazing event took place. The house was built by her father in 1935 when she was only four years old. She had seven brothers and sisters. Now the old house is in a family partnership and is shared with six other family members. We take turns using the house and we try to get there as often as possible. It is on the mainland but you can see the ocean in the distance from the front porch. You can hear the ocean and smell the salt air and feel the breeze. It is an oasis in the middle of a booming vacation area, surrounded by family houses and lots of old oak trees; a kind of island of its own.

Eleanor's sister lives just across the road, and she came over one day with a couple, Kevin and Marystar, who had two small children, Angus, who was five and a newly adopted little boy, Jacob, who was three. They were vacationing there with another couple and their two children. All four children were under six. Jacob had been in foster homes all three years of his life . . . in fact, in five foster homes! At that time, Jacob had been with his new family for only one week. He was a beautiful little fellow, with big brown eyes and wonderful smile; full of life and joy. We had a good visit. When Eleanor said to Angus, "Aren't you glad to have a little brother?" he replied, "Yes, but I really wanted a frog." But it was obvious he loved his new little brother.

A few days later, Kevin called to say that May 1 was his and Marystar's tenth wedding anniversary, and would I say a few prayers with them. He then added that Angus (remember he was five) had been asking them to get married because he had not been able to be at the first wedding. I told him that I would be delighted but added that I wanted to do the full marriage service, adapted for the occasion since they were already married. I thought that would please Angus.

And so, late in the afternoon of May 1, they arrived with the other couple and their two children. They had a large wedding cake, and Eleanor and her sister prepared the dining room for the reception. They wanted to have the service in the yard under the old oak trees dripping with Spanish moss. Marystar had on a lovely long dress, carried flowers, and wore a big hat. Kevin had on kilts, as did Angus. The other couple was designated as the best man and matron of honor. We did it up right! And it was fun. Angus was so pleased. It was still warm but not hot, with a gentle breeze. Who could ask for more?

After the service, I said somewhat casually, “Have these children been baptized?” They said they had not. I said, “Well, there is no time like the present. I will be glad to baptize them now.” Both couples thanked me and said they would wait. But a few minutes later, both men came to me and said that they wanted me to baptize their children right then. So Eleanor and her sister prepared the front porch: linen on the table, silver bowl with water, and that was all we needed. I baptized all four little children. It was wonderful.

After the service, I asked them to write out full names and addresses and place of birth for the parish register at Christ Church, Pensacola. It was then that Kevin said they had decided they wanted to change Jacob’s middle name and give him my name! I was moved literally to tears. How wonderful that moment was. That precious little three-year-old was now in both his family and his church family.

I thought that was the end of the story when they left that afternoon. Not only was it May 1 but it was Ascension Day, and we could feel God all around us. God was speaking to us all. It was very, very real. But two days later, Kevin dropped by to tell us goodbye since they were returning home to Indianapolis. He told us that the day after the baptism, Angus came to him and said he could not see the sign of the cross on his forehead that Fr. Currin had put there. Kevin said, “God can see it and that is all that matters.” Angus was satisfied.

Then Kevin said that later, Jacob said to him, “I am so happy in this family. Please don’t take me back.” My heart broke for that little boy. And Kevin said that before he could say anything, Angus (remember he was five years old) ran over to him, threw his arms around him, and said, “Jacob, you are my brother and a member of this family and you always will be with us.”

And I thought, “Except you be converted, and become as a little child, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” This event was both a miracle and a surprise. I had no idea, when I got up that morning, that all this would happen and that in the yard and on the porch of the old house at Pawleys Island, God would speak to us and make Himself known to us. Ascension Day miracle is what it was.

Yes, even though I am retired, God still works through me and continues to make me realize that His middle name is Surprise. God is good, and continues to use my priesthood in ways beyond my wildest dreams.



The Rev. B. Madison Currin is Rector Emeritus of Christ Church, Pensacola, Florida, where he was rector for 36 years, and honorary Canon of the Cathedral Church of St. Luke and St. Paul, Charleston, SC, where he was the last rector and first dean. He and his wife, Eleanor, live in Pensacola, and are active members of Christ Church. Retired since All Saints Day, 2002, Matt and Eleanor enjoy their family and grandchildren. Matt enjoys writing and Eleanor enjoys working in her yard and with her flowers. They have three sons and five granddaughters. Two of their sons live in Pensacola and one in St. Augustine, Florida with their families. Matt and Eleanor spend as much time as possible at the old family home at Pawleys Island, SC.

