



St. Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral

Capitol and West Streets • P.O. Box 1366 • Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1366 • (601) 354 1535 • standrews.ms

At the Monday, September 28th Vestry Meeting, Bishop Thompson opened the gathering with a reflection on our call to release fear and live freely. The Vestry asked that this message also be shared with the Cathedral parish.

See Bishop Thompson's reflection below.

Dear Cathedral Parishioners,

Recently, I visited someone in her final earthly days. The person was weak and tearful. She was not ready to say goodbye and was afraid of what lies ahead. To be honest, the encounter was an emotional moment for me. The fear of the unknown is always at our door.

For the past couple of weeks, I've been thinking about the experience. Fear and death are as natural as any emotion. The unknown can be tormenting, paralyzing and cause us to question core beliefs. The disciples often found themselves fearing what Jesus was doing and saying. Peter was fearful of Jesus' miracles and told Jesus to leave. Yet, Jesus stayed and offered his hand.

Congregations, too, can be fearful and anxious about dying. Whenever congregations start to cry, we need more youth, we need younger couples, you can bet they are concerned about dying. Everything has a life cycle. We are born, we have birthdays, and we die. Everything has a beginning and an ending. Even churches die. Knowing this truth can be freeing. Instead of wringing our hands, fearful of dying, we can choose to be alive now. In the movie, *The Shawshank Redemption*, Morgan Freeman's character, Ellis "Red" Redding, quips, "you either get busy living or get busy dying."

Learning to live freely is life-changing. We no longer worry about dying because that is a given. Now, we can focus on being alive, giving freely of ourselves. Being alive is living generously and hopefully. My friends, let us choose to be fully alive, now.

Brave journey,

+Morris

Interim Dean