THE SIGN OF GOD ON BEAU STREET
Rally Day –September 15, 2019 –Matthew 19: 13-15
The Church of the Covenant

Today is a day to celebrate what God is doing in the midst of His people. Today God is unveiling a sign of His love on Beau Street for the children in our community. Today is the day the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! Today God has set as a spiritual sign a wonderful sculpture, “Let the Little Children Come to Me”. Today, the Lord Jesus Christ arrives on Beau Street to welcome the little children unto Himself, unto the Lord of Life, unto life and new life and abundant life and eternal life. Today is Rally Day and the two streams of God’s work come together—Christian Education and little children coming to Jesus—Knowing Christ and making Him known to the next generation. Coming together. Do you want LIFE for your children and grandchildren? Then come to Jesus today...

The sculpture could not be a better church sign. Don’t get me wrong, I like our literal church sign that has the name of the church on it. But this church sign is a sign of who we are, and who we want to be, and who we want to become for our children and our community. We want to be that place where children and youth come to Jesus. We want to be that church where people who are not yet part of the family of God come and become part of the family of God, are welcome, received in love, embraced by the open arms of Jesus. We want to be that church who embodies and exemplifies Jesus’ words in our scripture for today ––Jesus said: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belong the Kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 19: 14)

I have watched as various vignettes have unfolded since it has been installed at the end of July. I have eavesdropped on a couple of them. The grandfather out taking a walk with his granddaughter and they walk over to the sculpture and I overhear him explaining to his granddaughter who Jesus is and how Jesus loves the little children. Perfect. I loved the Mother and her three children who were hanging out at the sculpture and the kids were sitting on the stones and they were getting up close and personal with some of the bronze figures of the little children and I started to walk over and the Mother began to say to her kids, “OK, everybody get down and step back” and I went over and said, “Oh no, the children are supposed to come to Jesus; they are supposed to touch the sculpture; they are supposed to sit on the stones and see God’s love right before them.” “Disciples, do not hinder them”, says Jesus. I love the depiction of little girl running across the field of wildflowers with such delight. It is a sign that we are all to run into the loving arms of Jesus. I love the joy on Jesus’ face, the exuberance of Him joyfully lifting up the little child toward heaven, the live and lively and alive Jesus, no cardboard cutout Savior, He. No this is an exciting Savior who loves the little children, who has come to open the love of God and the gates of heaven to all who run into His embrace. This is who Jesus really is, no dull saint mouthing pious phrases is He. This is the sign of God on Beau Street we dedicate today!
By contrast, there was another “quote unquote sign” plopped down on Beau Street last week. It is no mere coincidence that just last week a young woman was found dead of a drug overdose in a Porta-John, almost directly across Beau Street from our church. A nice young woman, obviously from her obituary, who struggled with her demons of addiction, but who was to listen to another voice, not the voice of Jesus, and hearken to another spirit, not the Holy Spirit. She could be your daughter. She could be your granddaughter, who had unfortunately filled her life and heart with things other than God. And even think of that symbolism, this child of God was thrown away in a locked toilet with the refuse of the world. It has upset me greatly and I have been thinking about it much since I read it in the OR. Where the Holy Spirit is at work, there are other things at work, also. That unfortunate day there were two signs set out on Beau Street. One of life and one of death. Jesus said in the Gospel of John –“The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy; I came (saith the Lord) that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10: 10)

It is why we must as a church make renewed commitments to Christian Education. It is why we must come together and with our time volunteer to be sure our church is the living embodiment of Jesus bidding the little children to come unto HIM. It is why we must live out the words of our Mission Statement –To know Christ and make Him known to the next generation. Because it would be utter hypocrisy to place that sculpture on our front lawn and then not deliver Jesus. It would be such a bait and switch to have Jesus bidding the little children to come on the outside and then they come but they don’t find Him on the inside. Every person here; new commitments in this hour; not just one or two. We are all children of God. We are all hearing the voice of Jesus. We are all hearing Him speak the words of truth into our hearts. Little children, God’s children, all, come unto me. The way is open and clear. Run with delight and joy into the open arms. Be that little girl running with delight, seeing the face of her Savior, laughing, accessible and waiting with open arms. To lift you up. To take you away from the very jaws of death and to place you near to His great heart. No one needs to die in a Porta-John on Beau Street. Saith the Savior --All can come to me and LIVE!!!

He has come to bring you life, and your children life, and your children’s children life... and not just mere life, but life abundant. Run into the arms of Jesus today. It is the sign of God on Beau Street. Amen and Amen.

By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, Pennsylvania

IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!