

We have gathered together today to give thanks to God for his great mercies to us over the years and particularly over the last three years since we began to restore this historic Church after almost 80+ years. We began with the rewiring of the entire Church, then we did the interior lighting using current technology, we re-laid the floor which was broken in many places and had it polished. The flooring of both the vestry and the Presbyter's office were completely re-laid with new light fixtures and additional storage cupboards. The entire woodwork in the Cathedral was polished and then the exterior lighting was done. In the second phase the roof of the Cathedral which had not been opened up ever before was completely opened up and redone including a waterproof membrane. The third phase was when all the paintings within the Church were restored including the three figurines within the Church. Today we have gathered here to give thanks to God for all that he has blessed us with in order to restore this Church and bring it to a pristine condition.

However, while we thank God for the privilege of worshipping in this Church we need to thank God for the real Church which is the body of believers. It is the gathering of God's people who are the true Church. The building facilitates the meeting of God's people and therefore is named as the church. So we are not only to tap ourselves on the back for all the restoration work that has been done but we must also see how we have been as the real body of Christ. This morning I would like us to focus on what it means to be the people of God from the letter of Peter.

Peter addresses the Christians and challenges them to grow up in their knowledge of God and their salvation. In order to this he asks them to get rid of certain attitudes and actions. They were to get rid of malice and deceit. If we are filled with hate and are thinking to get the better of the other person always then there will be no love within the body of Christ. Deceit on the other hand is to pretend that you are genuinely for a person but actually you are deceiving the person.

Peter then goes on to talk about hypocrisy, envy and slander. These are also attitudes and actions. A hypocrite is basically an actor. We too may be acting one thing before the public and another in our private space. We are called to get rid of envy where we are always wanting what others have and are never satisfied with what we have. We are also called to do away with slander which is way by which we smear another person's reputation by saying lies and half-truths. Peter calls all the new born Christians to grow spiritually with an eager desire as a newborn infant craves for his mother's milk.

Peter then reminds the Christians that they are the actual temple of God and each one of them were the stones that were being put together to form this spiritual temple. He reminds them that Jesus Christ is the precious stone who was rejected by human beings, but precious in God's sight through whom they were going to be transformed. He then goes on to give them a threefold identity as God's people. They were to be a chosen people, a kingdom of Priests, and a holy nation.

As much as we give thanks to God for the restoration of this physical edifice today we are called to build the spiritual temple of God's people as an international community that lives and imitates the character of Jesus. We are a chosen people, but chosen for service. We are called to be a kingdom of priests as we stand in the gap and bring God to the people by our life and witness and bring people to God by praying for them. We are to be a distinct community which practices truth and integrity and grows in the knowledge of Christ. May we as the Cathedral family grow in stature as the true temple of God.