

7 Pentecost Year A
July 31, 2011
St. Luke/Sheboygan Falls
Matthew 14:13-21

The Google Effect

Let us pray. Lord, give us the faith to see we have all we need and more. AMEN.

“We have nothing but five loaves and two fish,” said the disciples.

This statement seems typical of Jesus’ disciples of our own age as well. We look at the gifts that God has given us to use for his work and we wave them off as too little or as nothing without stopping to think that the gifts that God gives are always way more than enough.

Today’s gospel is the familiar story of Jesus’ feeding of 5000 men (not including women and children)

which may have easily doubled or even tripled the total number of the gathered crowd. It is one of the few miracles recorded in ALL FOUR GOSPEL ACCOUNTS.

One fact that is easy to ignore is that Jesus began with the seemingly tiny amount that his disciples brought to him. Five loaves and two fish were somehow multiplied to feed thousands of people with baskets to spare. Strangely enough when the original amount wasn’t enough to fill even one basketful. Hocus pocus? Or the sudden change of heart of the crowd as they brought out and shared what they had? Either way—a bonafide miracle in my book!

Are you sceptical that God can take something small, some talent or

gift you have squirreled away in your life and use it to do something bigger? The perfect example of this kind of miraculous multiplication in today's world comes in the field of technology with small companies like Microsoft and Apple.

UCC Pastor Candace Chellow-Hodge tells the story of a small company that started out as an idea between friends at Stanford University in 1996. Larry Page and Sergey Brin were frustrated with early web search engines and all of the unrelated junk that would come up. They set out to make the world's best search engine from a friend's basement in Menlo, California. They started out calling it "backrub" based on the algorithm used to calculate

popular searches. Can you imagine if anytime you wanted to search for someone on the internet you had to "backrub" them? Needless to say, they needed a new name. In 1997, what do you suppose they came up with? GOOGLE.

From these small beginnings, huge things have grown. It only takes a spark to get a fire going. Tiny seeds grow mighty trees.

It is a lesson from the corporate world that speaks to us in the church—all it takes is an idea, or a small gesture and wondrous things can result.

What is your gift? A smile, a listening ear, a ride to church, cloth to make quilts, school supplies for needy kids, the list goes on and on.

Whatever you might think is tiny and insignificant may be more than enough for God to use to make a difference.

United Methodist Bishop William Willimon shares an inspirational story of how one inner city church that seemed to be dying made use of many of its members small gifts to bring basketfuls of blessings to its community.

One Sunday, the new, young pastor mentioned how she noticed all the neighborhood children around the church yard after school.

“Few of those children have parents at home in the afternoon. That means most of them go home to an empty house or else hang out in the streets on their own, and you know

what that can lead to,’ she told the congregation, ‘I wonder if God is calling somebody here, this morning to respond to ths. I look out and see experienced, wise people who, in their day, were masters at raising children. Is this your day to step up and raise someone else’s child?’”

The next week six people stepped up to begin an after school ministry, one of whom was the oldest member of the church. They were quickly joined by a dozen others who provided recreation, tutoring and refreshments. That church is now thriving with an influx of new members from the neighborhood. God had given them more than enough to not only survive, but thrive!

Hopefully, we can use what
gifts we have been given not only to
hang on, but to go forward in faith,
sharing basketfuls of blessings with
our community and world. There are
no limits to our imaginations and
where God's grace can take them.

AMEN.