

Chapel Talk
Sunday, September 27, 2009
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Good Morning! Today is the AIDS Walk and it is one of my favorite days of the year! This walk has become a very important day for me since I have been at St. Andrew's. The amount of spirit that comes from this community makes a huge impact on me, our community and those living with HIV and AIDS. This summer I got to spend a week with Griz in Buffalo, New York. Griz and I became really good friends last year and we decided that I needed to visit the north! Hi my name is Bill and I am addicted to Facebook! Since I am addicted to Facebook I started posting about the trip from the moment I got in the car to leave. I would put what we did that day and I would post many of the amazing pictures I took. I would constantly get comments from people leaving messages for me to pass to Griz. When I would check Facebook either on my computer or with my iPhone, I would pass those messages to Griz. One day I was reading him messages and he said "Wow, I really did make an impact on those people". I was so intrigued by this comment that I posted a status message one evening that read "Bill is going to bed after a totally awesome day with Griz! I keep passing messages to him and he keeps saying, 'I guess I really did make a good impact on people'. Note to self: Don't underestimate your impact on people." Since that day I have been thinking a lot on the impacts we make. Every morning I get up and come to work and in this process I start impacting a lot of things and people around me. So you are thinking how does that make an impact on anything? It impacts a lot so let's break this down to some of the more simple impacts that this process makes.

I get out of bed I turn on the light. I have now impacted the power grid as I am using electricity. I take a shower. I have now impacted the water supply, the natural gas supply that heats my water and my gas bill. I get in my car, I crank it, and I have now impacted the air we breathe. I now get on the road to head to the School and any move I make without watching could impact many people on the road around me. As you can see, we constantly are making an impact on people and things around us but most of time we don't even know it. I called my mom a few weeks ago and told her about this talk and that I was going to talk about the impacts we make. She brought up a very important point and that is that sometimes we can make a negative impact.

I was thinking about negative impacts and how they sometimes happen. We can say something sometimes in the heat of the moment that is very out of a character for us or goes against what we stand for and this can make a negative impact on people that can sometimes not be repaired. I remember when I came out to my family my dad saying to me that I was going to hell and he didn't care if I was his son or not. He then said he hated gay people and that he was not changing his views just because I was his son. Now think how this would impact you if your parent or guardian said something like that to you. It impacted me very deeply. It shattered the bond I had with my dad, it made me question anything he ever said to me, and it made me think about what love really is.

As you can tell it is important to think about the impacts we are making often and this can include thinking before we speak because once it is out of your mouth, you cannot take it back! I was also talking to Mr. DeSalvo a couple of weeks ago about this talk and he said something that I had not thought about either, and that is sometimes it is the smallest things we say or do that make the greatest impact. This is why we have to think about our impact because it can be bad or good and it does not take much to make a huge impact. After thinking about this I was trying to remember something I said that seemed trivial at the time - good or bad - that made a huge impact on someone and it hit me. Thank goodness it was a good one and not a bad one! The story goes like this. It was the summer of 1998 the year after I graduated high school. I went on my usual summer mission trip with my church. My church and another Associate Reformed Presbyterian church from another close-by town teamed up. What we did on our mission trips was provide a Vacation Bible School for a church that did not have the manpower or money to make a Vacation Bible School happen. I was teamed up with Thomas Henderson who is 5 years younger than I, and we were going to teach the middle school aged kids. At the end of the week Thomas and I were talking about how the week went. I said to Thomas at some point during this "to always remember that joy that God gives you so you can share it with other people." Thomas and I have always kept in touch even if it has been sporadic at best. During one of these times where we caught up with each other, we were talking and Thomas said, "Bill, I remember something you said to me on the last day of Vacation Bible School at Harrogate United Methodist Church. You told me to always remember that joy that God gives

you so you can share it with other people.” This nearly 9 years after I said this to him. I was dumbfounded that something I did not even remember saying was remembered by Thomas. He still, to this day, 11 years later, remembers that. He is currently in seminary to become a pastor. As you can see, sometimes it is not the huge things we say or do that make the biggest impacts, but the smallest.

Today each one of you that has bought Cheerwine, donated money and those that are walking are doing small things that are making a huge impact on our community and those people living with HIV and AIDS here in Delaware. Today as you cross the Brandywine River bridge you will be given a carnation to drop in the water. Before tossing your carnation think about the impact you have made today and think about those living with HIV and AIDS and the amazing impact they have made on our lives! So go out today and enjoy your walk knowing you have helped make an impact on someone’s life and always remember that joy that God gives you so that you can share it with other people! AMEN!