

Column

Lent, the season of the church in which we find ourselves, is a time, in which spiritual growth is the goal. Words found on church signs mostly in rural areas come to mind, “Come, grow with us.” Almost certainly Lent is not in view by those who erect these signs: numerical growth is. Whatever the intent, these signs bring a smile to my face.

In many cases, next door to the church will be an open-air pavilion with long tables down the middle. Letting my imagination run wild, I can see those tables groaning with fried chicken, potato salad, Aunt Milly’s green bean casserole (don’t want miss that one) freshly sliced tomatoes and desserts too many to count.

In preparation for the meal to begin, children are silenced for the blessing. Everyone secretly prays old Brother Johnson who can pray a 25-pound turkey cold won’t be called on. Long or short, once it is finished, a

woman with a flowered dress rushes through the waiting throng with a plate of devilled eggs and a pan of biscuits. Breathlessly she places them on the table. Dinner can now begin.

Before long the tables are surrounded by men and women, boys and girls, juggling paper plates and cups of iced tea. People laugh and talk as they attempt to take a little of everything, but the volume goes down as they are seated and forks and knives descend in the direction of heaped-up plates.

One portly gentleman is over heard signing as he brings his third to the table, “I think I just about lost my appetite! He then sits down, groans and looses his belt a notch. Growth occurs in a variety of ways, often in places we don’t want!

Putting my imaginary scene aside, the invitation “Come, grow with us” is a good one. It serves – or should serve – as a reminder that the church exists not just for

those who are already members, but for those who pass by. Jesus is giving a party, and we're all invited! Christians are His handwritten invitations.

But another type of growth is envisioned. This is the type of which the apostle Peter speaks when he writes: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Not all God's children want to grow in girth, but all should want to grow in grace. This latter includes growth in understanding of the Scriptures, growth in our ability to share our faith and growth in our capacity to translate the written precepts found in the Bible into real life.

"Come, grow with us" may make us smile, but it should also make us think. Make growth a priority. Be a well-developed follower of Jesus.

*“We beseech thee, Almighty God,
mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy
great goodness they may be governed and
preserved evermore, both in body and soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Collect
for Fifth Sunday in Lent, Book of Common
Prayer)*

*The Rev. Victor H. Morgan is rector of St.
Luke’s Church, Blue Ridge.*