



# ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

11856 MAYS CHAPEL RD., TIMONIUM, MD 21093

**The Twenty Fourth Sunday after Trinity, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

*And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.*

**✠ In The Name of The Father and of The Son  
And of The Holy Ghost. Amen. ✠**

This woman, St. Mark tells us “had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.” She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and put her hand to his cloak. “If I just touch His clothing,” she thought, “I will get well.” Immediately her flow of blood dried up and the feeling that she was cured ran through her whole body. Jesus was immediately aware that healing power had gone out from him. He turned around and when he saw the woman he said to her: “Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.”

The Gospel gives us many examples of Jesus touching people: of people being touched and healed. Jesus touched lepers and healed them. Jesus washed blind Bartimaeus’ eyes and restored his sight. Jesus healed the deaf and dumb man by touching his tongue and ears. Jesus gathered little children in his arms and loved and blessed them. Touch was very important to Jesus. Why? Because he was fully human as well as fully divine. In his humanity, by the shedding of his blood on the cross he redeemed us. Touch is very important to us; the touch of another is very significant. Almost life giving.

There was a study done several years ago about infants that were not picked up out of their cribs. Their physical needs were taken care of but they were given only minimal touching. These children did not develop as rapidly and suffered more illness than infants who were picked up and held, cuddled and loved.

Human beings appreciate what touch is. So does our God. So did our Lord Jesus Christ in his incarnation. And so does the Body of Christ, the Church.

When a priest takes an infant into his arms, and pours water on the child's forehead in Baptism, the child is touched and the Lord fills that child with his own Spirit. A bishop by anointing with chrism and imposition of hands at confirmation opens a young person's life to active participation of witness in the life of the Church. "If anyone is sick among you, let him call for the priests of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil." (Again, a touch) "And the prayer of faith will save the sick man."

A priest places the host in your hand or on your tongue and

touches your lips with the chalice and you are fed with the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

A man kneels before his bishop and the bishop places his hands on the man's head and prays for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the man rises a priest to bear witness to bear witness to the Mystery of God's love in his life and to the community.

Each of these sacraments is a manifestation of God's working with physical things, with a touch. At the very core of our being is the notion of touch. In human relationships touch is quite good and normal. It is a form of communication that we can use in the way that God would have us use it. When you touch another in love, it is Christ in you who touches another because you are in Christ. You are members of Christ's body. And because of that, you can convey this miracle of God's love with a touch. Even in the simple and ordinary dealings of our lives, we can touch one another, and it can be the touch of the love of Christ himself. *Amen.*

*Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God*