

## COLUMN

# An object lesson in faith from the squirrels

By Malissa Martin  
For Digital First Media

When I read the morning paper, I usually sit at the kitchen table, but this particular morning, I decided to read at my desk. When I turned to face the window, I saw two squirrels sitting on the neighbor's fence. One's tail wagged in confidence, while the other's appeared petrified.

The fence belonged to a family who owned a big, mean, and surly pit bull. This dog barked and growled most times when people walked by. All of a sudden, the confident squirrel turned to the fearful one.

I don't know squirrel language, but it seemed to say, "Stay right here. I'll be right back." Then it leaped off the fence and disappeared into the yard. The second squirrel appeared to have no plans to move. After what seemed like an eternity, the other squirrel returned, raced up the fence, chattered

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something to the other squirrel and then they both leaped into the treacherous dog's territory.

I was on the edge of my seat fearing the dog was going to have squirrels for breakfast. I watched in awe as the first squirrel lead the other one across the yard to safety beyond the fence. Once they were out of the dog's reach, I let out a sigh of relief.

The entire scenario made me think of how God leads us through life's problems. We can see only the big, surly beast in front of us and are incapacitated with fear. But God is the all-wise, all-powerful confident one. Nothing is too hard for him. He sees only opportunity for rescue

and freedom.

I wonder what was going through the mind of the squirrel that appeared to be frozen with fear. What gave him the confidence to follow his partner?

Sometimes I face problems and feel like a fearful squirrel sitting on the fence above a ferocious dog. I pray for God to come and help me, but sometimes he appears to have abandoned me.

I'm reminded to not give up! Like the confident squirrel, I know my God has gone ahead of me to prepare a plan of escape. Now is the time for me to exercise faith — to trust and obey. Maybe this time of waiting is for my own safety, as well as my spiritual growth. Learning to trust and obey now might be just what I need to follow him safely through the dangers that lie ahead.

*"Yet those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles. ..."* (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV).  
Now that's the way to go!

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## WALK OF FAITH

## Be resolute to follow your dreams

We can learn a great deal from children. Often, they are unaffected by the doubts, insecurities and disappointments that plague the adult world.

One evening a few years back when I was preparing dinner and my daughter was setting the table, she turned to me with her blue eyes and she asked, "Mom, can we have a hamster?"

Her question caught me off guard for a moment. Then I answered, "Oh, honey, I don't think we should get a hamster."

Nevertheless, my persistent, 8-year-old implored, "But, Mom, I will take care of it! I'll

clean the cage. I will feed it, and love it."

Trying to convince me she added, "Mom, hamsters are easy pets to care for. ... I have been reading about them in school."

With that, my daughter ran to the closet, grabbed her pink backpack, reached in and took out a book titled "Hamsters." She flipped through its pages and showed me all the hamsters' photographs. Next, she cited every statistic in that book and even selected the breed of hamster she thought would be best for our family. Thinking I may have a budding veterinarian in the house, I said, "We'll see, sweetheart."

Day after day, my daughter would ask, "Can we get a hamster today?" And she'd say, "I'd love a hamster."

Weeks went by, and persistently she asked, "Have you thought more about us getting a hamster, Mom?" Most often, I'd reply, "I don't know yet."

Regardless of my reservations and despite the unlikely probability, my daughter was determined to make her dream of getting a hamster come true.

My daughter had a goal. But she didn't sit back, mope around and dream about it. Rather, she was motivated, doing everything she could to make it happen. She studied book after book from the library about hamsters. She'd talk about hamsters. My artistic daughter drew pictures of hamsters and posted them in her room. And she was surrounded by positive influences, as her sisters both believed in her dream and urged her onward.

When we went to the pet store to buy supplies for her other animals, she and her sisters looked at hamster cages and even selected the best one for our "future" needs. In our home, my daughter chose a perfect spot for the cage and imagined playing with and caring for the small animal.

She put action behind her dreams as she patiently waited, saving her own money, so that she could even pay for it.

Although her requests were first rejected, she believed in her dream. There was never a doubt in that child's mind that the day would come when she'd have a hamster of her own.

Imagine what would occur if we all pursued our heart's aspirations with that same gusto and enthusiasm. I wonder, even if we experienced initial negative responses or setbacks, what could come about in our lives if we went after our goals with positive expectation and full focus?



Catherine Galasso-Vigorito  
A New You

## FAITH

## Can the Anglican-Episcopalian union be saved?

By Kimberly Winston  
For Religion News Service

The Anglican Communion has voted to suspend the Episcopal Church, its American branch, from participating in decision-making and governance for three years. The move came in a private meeting of Anglican leaders in Canterbury, England and is designed to send a message — Anglicans feel the decisions Episcopalianism have made regarding gay clergy (they got 'em), same-sex marriage (they do 'em) are out of line with what the majority of Anglicans consider Christian doctrine.

**Q**: What is the relationship of the Episcopal Church to the Anglican Communion?

**A**: The Episcopal Church is one of 44 member churches that make up the Anglican Communion, most of which trace their roots to the Church of England, which broke from Rome in 1534. History buffs and viewers of PBS's "Wolf Hall" will remember that Henry was up-

set over another marriage — his to Queen Catharine of Aragon, which Rome would not dissolve so he could marry his mistress, Ann Boleyn. Today, the Anglican Communion represents about 85 million Christians in 165 countries. The Episcopal Church has 109 dioceses in the U.S., Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe. It claims just over 2 million members, the vast majority of them (1.8 million) in the U.S. Over one-half of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Episcopalian.

The Anglican Communion has no authority over its member churches, each of which governs itself. It has no pope, like Roman Catholicism, but considers its "primates," as leaders are called, equal. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, is considered "first among equals." Michael Curry is the newly-installed Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church and is attending the conference.

**Q**: What's rocking the Anglican boat? Why can't they all just get along?

**A**: Like many other Christian denominations, the Anglican Communion is divided on the question of homosexuality within the church. In 1976, Episcopal Church officials voted to affirm homosexuals as "children of God," and the following year ordained their first gay priest. A quarter of a century later, it ordained Gene Robinson as the first openly gay bishop — and that's when things heated up. Anglican leaders met, issued a warning statement against Robinson's consecration. Robinson wore a bullet-proof vest beneath his vestments at the ceremony. Six U.S. dioceses left the Episcopal Church and aligned themselves with member churches as far away as Nigeria. That kicked off on-going litigation about what those formerly-Episcopal churches do and do not own among church property.

Since then, almost every large Anglican and Episcopal meeting has included some discussion of the Episcopal Church's relationship to the broader communion. Can it continue? Will it continue? Or will the Episcopal Church separate from the Anglican Communion? The discus-

sion intensified when, in early July — only a few days after the Supreme Court made same-sex marriage the law of the land — Episcopal Church leaders voted to permit their clergy to perform same-sex marriages. Justin Welby's response: the decision "will cause distress for some and have ramifications for the Anglican Communion as a whole, as well as for its ecumenical and interfaith relations."

**Q**: What happens now?

**A**: The sanctions imposed on the Episcopal Church are for three years. Near the end of that period, Episcopalianism will convene at their triennial "general convention," and its a sure bet they will craft their official, denominational response. As to what that will be, Anglicans have different ideas. Some in the broader communion hope the Episcopal Church will change its ways. But many Episcopal leaders say there is no going back. Schism may be on the horizon.

## IT'S TIME TO EAT

Our new Sunday Eat page helps you prepare and share what you love with those you love so you can nourish everyone, inside and out. We bring you recipes you can make in a hurry, ideas for party planning and a new reader-exchange column that'll help you find the recipes you remember.



Look for it every Sunday. Let me know what you think.  
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— Nicole Robertson, features editor

