

I realized this week that I have not grieved what we've lost. I tried writing this Pentecost sermon and was cheerleading the whole way through it. You know what I'm saying, God is with us, we are not alone, we will get through this together. I wrote and I wrote and I wrote but I never felt like I had a cohesive sermon. I opened a previous year's sermon on Pentecost and I reminded myself what I had said before. I tried to pull up last years and realized I did not preach Pentecost because we were in California – I was at my home church and suddenly it all came together. I was stuck because this is not as it should be.

We should be all together in our Sanctuary celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We should be enjoying cake & punch. We should have had pictures and stories reminding us of all that has happened before us and be dreaming of what is to come. As my kids are fond of saying, I hate the coronavirus. It's ok to be angry, sad, frustrated, tired and any other emotion that you have. That is part of what it means to be human. But what we do with these emotions – that is what makes us disciples of Jesus Christ.

Pentecost is a story we hear and celebrate every year. But unlike Christmas & Easter we do not quite know what to do with it. When I was in seminary, I had a professor who had us draw a picture or use words to describe the 1<sup>st</sup> person of the Trinity – God, Father, Creator, Yahweh, Old Man these were the most

prominent images & names associated. Next was the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity – Jesus, Son, Redeemer again all common images. As we put down the 3<sup>rd</sup> person of the Trinity – Spirit & Sustainer were most common words but how do you draw it. We spent a good deal of time talking about how in our time and place we do not have a strong identity or tie to the Holy Spirit.

The Early Church had a much richer connection to the Holy Spirit. In addition to the ones we named Wisdom, Sophia, Wild Goose, Dove, Fire. But more than anything the Holy Spirit was untamed – it went & took us to places where we needed to be not necessarily where we thought.

I am reminded that we need to allow the Holy Spirit to work within us – stretching us as we grow in our faith. We need to be open to what God is doing in us and through us. We need to trust God. We know that the disciples did not get what Easter was all about. Even though Jesus taught them and prepared them they were not ready. Remember how Easter morning & evening found the disciples in locked rooms? Jesus appeared and spent 50 days preparing them some more. The scripture stories are short. There are not many but my friends – Peter is entirely different when we get to the morning of Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit descended as a rush of wind and everyone could hear what was being said in their native language they were in awe. And then

some folks said they must all be drunk. What does Peter do – does he lash out as he did in the garden? Does he shrink back as he does in the courtyard? No, Peter steps up and says we are not drunk, quotes from the prophet Joel and by the end of his sermon has 3000 people join the church.

We have the opportunity to love and lead in this time. We know that the church is not a building. We know the church is not bound by time or space. We know that the church is the people of God. We know that Church can happen anywhere. We saw that during Harvey and Imelda and now Corona. As we continue to step into the unknown we do so with faith – the call in our lives to love God with our heart, mind, soul and strength. We love our neighbors as we love ourselves. What is our witness in this time? Are we asserting our own wants and desires or are we placing others' ahead of our own? Are we being flexible and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us in new directions or are we stubbornly refusing to move?

I do not know what the next few weeks look like. For me as a planner that is hard. I want to know and plan and prepare. And yet we are not alone. God is with us. God is calling and leading and moving within us. We can look at our history where Mr. Campbell & Mrs. McGowan, now Dudley dreamed and planned and prepared to bring the people called Methodists to the

Hamshire-Fannett community. What is God calling us to next? I do not know but I promise to go where the Spirit leads. Will you join me into the unknown faith? In the name of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit.