

DAY OF PENTECOST

RECOLLECTING OURSELVES FOR WORSHIP

Music (please use this time for quiet and reflection)

Gong [followed by silence]

Call to Worship – Acts 2:1-21, John 20:19-23

Hymn – 376 [Love Devine, All Loves Excelling]

Opening Prayer

OUR HUMANNES AND GOD'S GRACE

Call to Confession

Unison Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, I have been raised to carry the weight of my own life. I feel a responsibility to have my external life meet certain standards of accountability and productivity. I feel a similar responsibility regarding my internal life, seeking to maintain certain feelings states, making sure that my emotional life is not detrimental to myself or others. I rarely consider that my sense of being responsible might be skewed, might be prejudiced against myself and others so that the way I live out being responsible ends up being harmful to me and them. When I consider that my sense of responsibility can be twisted this way, I realize the importance and value of paying attention to the way you interact with me. You are what seeks to balance the biases of the way I grew up; you introduce me to those things about myself I ignore; you seek to make me sensitive to those things about my life to which I have become insensitive. You do this in order to make me more human and humane in the way I treat myself and others. I count on your persistence in this to offset my adherence to any way of life that is no longer helpful. Help me pay attention to your correctives, especially those I consider intrusions.

Personal Prayer of Confession in Silence

Assurance of Pardon

LISTENING FOR THE WORD OF GOD

Story for the Children

Scripture – John 14:8-17, 25-27

Prompting

Silence and Reflection

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Hymn – 320 [The Lone, Wild Bird]

Announcements

Minute for Mission

Our Gifts and Offerings

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Christ all creatures here below;

Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter;

One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.

The Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us in the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours

now and forever. Amen.

GOING OUT – to serve, to journey, to live the word

Hymn – 326 [Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart]

Charge and Benediction

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

TODAY	10:00	Worship and Church School
	11:00	Coffee and Fellowship
	11:20	Conversation
MONDAY	1:00	Centering Prayer, church office

Lectionary Readings from Cycle C for June 16, 2019

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15.

F.Y.I.

Our musician is Erin Garcia-Norris.

Next Sunday we will share lunch. Plan to stay and bring some food to share.

Faith Presbyterian Church, 190 Arlen Dr., Rohnert Park CA 94928

Church Office: 707-795-6620

Our web site is <www.faithpresbyterianrp.org>

Elders: Marolyn Bode, Mary Jane Beccaria, Karen Kessel.

Deacons: Richard Egan, Esha Egan, Wanjiru Muthamia.

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Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21; John 14:8-17, 25-27)

Pentecost is the commemoration of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. Historically, this happened at a festival celebrated in Judaism known as Pentecost. The early church kept this festival, changed the meaning associated with it, and assimilated it into its own liturgical celebrations. Using 21st Century concepts, what this festival celebrates is the arrival of a particular way of viewing God, one which allows us to understand the work of God more broadly, and to locate the activity of God within us more easily and more completely. It is helpful to approach Pentecost developmentally, as a perception built upon earlier perceptions God has brought us, which together give us the experience of the fullness of our own life.

We all leave childhood with an idea about how our life should be or we want it to be, and we begin the work of fashioning our life into that idea. One way to view God is to see God as that which initiates, develops and supports the cognitive functions that enable us to make this effort to fashion a life for ourselves.

For different reasons, our idea of a life does not do justice to the person we actually are; that is, it does not allow us to express and manifest some of, or a lot of, the person we are. So, a second way to view God is to see God as that which makes us aware of this lack of fit. God enables our awareness of feelings, thoughts and actions that are true of us yet do not match the idea of our life which we have internalized. We become able to recognize thoughts, feelings and behaviors we consider intrusions, and because we think of them as intrusions, we work to remove them from our awareness. We fail, and discover that what was removed is returned to awareness repeatedly until we begin to value it.

A third way to view how God is with us is by paying attention to the arrival of the ability to recall what has been disclosed to us, and also the onset of an interest in exploring it and discovering how to assimilate and integrate what we have learned about ourselves so that we can use it. The arising of the ability to remember those things we have learned about ourselves which do not match our idea regarding what our life should be, and the appearance of an interest in how to put those things to use, is that to which the arrival of the Holy Spirit refers. The arrival of this third way of viewing God gives us a complete picture of how God works to bring us the experience of the fullness of our own life. It is the giving of this third way of viewing God that is commemorated and celebrated at Pentecost.

[Jim Robie, 6-7-19]

Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, John 14:8-17, 25-27)

The term “Holy Spirit” is greatly misunderstood in that we tend to think the term is referring to a thing, an entity or being, which it is not. “Holy Spirit” is the label or name given to a way of looking at and organizing certain facets of the way God interacts with us. When we use the term “Holy Spirit” we are indicating that we are focusing on and highlighting certain activities which occur within us, and are making the statement that we understand these as being part of what God does within us. The term “Holy Spirit” appears in New Testament documents written in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries. However, the church’s understanding of “Holy Spirit” was not articulated until the early 4th century. In the Liturgical Year the Day of Pentecost is celebrated as the day on which this way of viewing and understanding God first “dawned on” the disciples. That is, the disciples began to recognize certain internal activities as being attributes of God, something they had not seen before, and their seeing and understanding God in this way they called “Holy Spirit.”. An account of this is found in Acts 2:1-21. There is another and different account of the manifesting of the “Holy Spirit”, found in John 20:22-23. It is fair to say that in the early years of its life the church was struggling to articulate something it was beginning to experience yet could not quite grasp. We are going to look at the “Holy Spirit” from the perspective of the church’s understanding stated in 325 CE, at the Council of Nicaea, where the church came to understand “Holy Spirit” as describing one of three aspects of the way God interacts with us, God being understood as a Trinity. We will use the descriptions of “Holy Spirit” found in the Gospels and in Acts to help us understand what this interaction is.

For most people, God is a reality that makes us feel good and supports us in having the life we want. With this belief in place we look for whatever in our life makes us feel good and supports the life we want, paying particular attention to these things, and seeing them as being of God. In addition, when we have this focus we turn away from anything that does not fit into this focus; if it does not make us feel good and support us in having the life we want we either ignore it or complain about it. The early church came to an

understanding that God was a reality that intended something other than this focus for us. It began to think of God as intending us to live by being responsive to the influence of God [that would be to live in the kingdom of God], and to have a life characterized by perpetual vitality [eternal life]. In the church’s understanding, this influence of God was seen as bringing us the experience of “the fullness of our particular human life,” something which includes several things: 1) our being made aware of what we know and like about ourselves; but more than that, 2) our also being made aware of what we do not know about ourselves even though it is true; and in addition, 3) our especially being made aware of things about our life we do not like and enjoy. God began to be viewed as intervening in our lives in a powerful way, as interfering with and disrupting the efforts we make to be someone we think we should be, were taught we should be, or want to be. The intent of this intervention is to assist and encourage us in apprehending the person we are and then being that person: the fullness of our life. To be a Christian would be to view God as working for this, and to look within for the indicators of the fullness of our life being brought to our awareness.

As this understanding of God took hold, people began to notice things occurring in them which before had not been seen as valuable or as related to God: the voices in our head, the internal conflicts and struggles that influence and shape us, the adjustments and compromises which have been necessary for us to live as long as we have, and the price we pay for these compromises and adjustments, etc. These began to be seen as valuable because they disclose to us the life we actually have and need to own as ours. The church gave the label of the 2nd Person of the Trinity, or Christ, to the view of God that helped us focus on the disclosing of these excluded/ignored parts of our life. In other words, the church began to understand that this work of disclosing us to ourselves was something God did all the time, and it began to pay attention to it as the main activity which brought the fullness of our life to us. When we view God from the point of view of the 2nd Person of the Trinity, we organize our attention to notice these internal things, especially the thoughts and feelings that are true of us yet in some

way have been left out of, or been discouraged from being included in, our experience of ourselves.

As time went on, the church communities began to notice other things happening within them which built on the disclosures which came to them. Something within them advocated for what had been disclosed, and they found themselves able to remember what they had learned and to work with it to make it part of their experience, and then use it. The church began to view these occurrences as being another part of the way God is present with us, and gave this way of viewing and focusing on God the title the 3rd Person of the Trinity, or “Holy Spirit.

When the early church viewed God as “Holy Spirit,” they focused on certain aspects of the work God does to bring us the fullness of our own life. The following texts give us clues as to what would be highlighted when viewing God in this way.

Acts 2:1-21: the early church discovered the disclosing of their own lives gave them a peculiar ability to communicate with themselves and others, and they attributed this ability to God. The text describes how “tongues” were distributed among the disciples [the Greek word refers to a language or dialect], i.e. a way to communicate with others about God’s deeds of power in disclosing us to ourselves, and to do so in terms those listening could understand. What we learn from what God discloses about ourselves allows us to understand ourselves better and increases our self-talk so that we can hear and understand the conversations that go on inside us. In effect, this gives us a language to talk about internal things, deeper things. Our internal experiences correspond to those of others, so we are able to understand their internal experiences and speak to them about these experiences in a way they understand. We learn to communicate with others about what we have experienced and seen regarding the work of disclosure which God does in us, and also in them. We prophesy, i.e. speak under inspiration, about things most people cannot talk about. We see visions, in the sense that we see into what is happening and have insights about what goes on below the surface of life, and talk about these in ways others can understand.

John 14:8-17, 25-27: the disclosing on which we focus when we view God as Christ has the experience of being “true, in the sense of no longer being concealed.” We find we gain the ability to remember what has been disclosed, as though the truth has an advocate which helps us call it to mind.

John 20:19-23: the disclosing on which we focus when we view God as Christ brings with it an ability to understand others in a compassionate way and to speak to them about being welcomed and not judged for what they feel and think, and who they are.

When we view God through the lens of “Holy Spirit” we focus on these activities operating within us.

[Jim Robie, 6-7-19, Pentecost, Cycle C, Acts 2:1-21, John 14:8-17, 25-27]