

Shared gifts lead to gratitude in abundance

Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

As we celebrate the birth of the church we give thanks for all that we share, all that we are and all that we shall be together. What happened on the day of Pentecost, isn't a one-time thing. It says in the passage from 1 Corinthians that:

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

The definition of manifestation is “a sign that something exists...something is made real. It is an event, action or object that clearly embodies something abstract or theoretical.

The balloons today are a reminder that God calls each one of us, reminding us that we are not alone and that we are a part of something bigger than ourselves. Jesus invites each one of us to follow, to serve, and to love all people – all creation. The Spirit ignites in each of us a passion for sharing all that we have received for the common good.

The letter to the Corinthians, written by Paul, is seeking to address the individualism and greed that had taken over this cosmopolitan city of the ancient world. One biblical scholar compared Corinth to Las Vegas. The people of Corinth according to Paul had become spoiled...they were not acting as children of God. In the portion of the letter that we read today, Paul reminds the people of Corinth and also reminds us today that no one person has been given more than another. Furthermore, what we have been given has come from the same God. Thus we are being called to work together and share what we have in order to help one another and all people in the kin-dom of God. No one gift is better than another.

Paul uses the Body of Christ image as a way of helping God's people understand how we are to work together. If Jesus Christ is the head of the church, each of us makes up the rest of the body. We each have a different role to play, some of us are the muscles, some of us the skin, some of us the liver, or the lungs, the finger or the toe. Each of us has a purpose, which is why we are called to celebrate today the diversity that exists among us.

At Robertson-Wesley United we are **guided** by the Statement of Welcome and Inclusion found on the front of the bulletin.

We are **dedicated** to creating a safe space for all people, where we **encourage** one another to use the spiritual gifts that we have been given to also create safe spaces for people in the world. We seek to break down barriers that prevent people from answering God's call. Because we are so different, we are faced with challenges. Not everyone is going to act or do things in the way we expect nor think they should and that is good! What we must remember is that unity is not uniformity. Inclusion is not turning people into clones. There is no ONE way to be a Christian. There is however ONE GOD and ONE SPIRIT and ONE BODY OF CHRIST. AND WE BELONG TO GOD.

As a community of faith, having received the Holy Spirit and these spiritual gifts we are now discerning what God wants us to do with these collective gifts. The gifts we have received are different from the ones that Millwoods United have received...and different from Christ Church Anglican, or the Beth Shalom. Each person of faith, each community of faith is helping to heal and serve God's world. We don't have to be the same, but we must remember that we are all God's children and precious in God's sight. The virtue that we are focussing on for the next month is Honesty. The Virtue's Project defines honesty as: "being truthful, sincere, open, and genuine. We are content and confident to be ourselves. We see ourselves and others with unclouded eyes. We do not exaggerate to impress others. We refuse to cheat or take what is not ours. We strive to keep our promises. As we recognize illusions and self-deceptions, we gently let them go. We admit mistakes even when we know someone may be disappointed or angry. We heal old messages that tell us we are less than worthy. We stand strong, knowing that we have true value in being who we are."

Listen to this last statement again as if God were saying it to you. "You have true value in being who you are!" God has said "you are precious in my sight and I honor and love you!" I hope that as you discover your spiritual gift you will find ways to share it with the world. I pray that you will find ways to work with others to bring healing and love to the world.