

Pastor Roy's sermon from June 4, 2017 (Pentecost)

Today we celebrate the Spirit with us. Pentecost is a festival like Easter and Christmas. Pentecost is simple, so basic, like breathing, like eating, as a child who learns to walk or to sit on her or his mother or father's lap—to give or receive love or friendship, to act with kindness.

Christmas is a celebration of God with us in Jesus, born of Mary.

Easter is a celebration of resurrection—that death is not to be feared. Resurrection is a sure gift to those who embrace it.

All of these festivals remind us that the gift of God is free. The gift of God is life and mercy. No one is exempt. We try to put limits on the love of God, but every time they fail. If we dig down through the layers of stuff we have to do to please God. . .we get to the bottom and there is nothing left. We have no bargaining power. In moments of humble honesty, we offer ourselves to God, to the Spirit, and grace is free. The free gift of life. That is Pentecost.

Oh, how creative we are in making rules—all the ways we seek to please God, to satisfy God, to be good, to do right, and expect others to tow the line. But there is nothing.

We were reminded this weekend at synod assembly on Friday, that our faith is simple. Deep humility. Compassionate love. Listening. Noticing. Caring.

As individuals, as families, as congregations. Our liveliness, our vitality is not about control, and making sure things go the way we want them to go, but about love in the midst of it all. When things don't go the way we need them to go, maybe there is another way??

Flexibility is the key to living well. If I have to have it all a certain way, I will be miserable, right? How many things actually go precisely the way we want them to go?

Perhaps that is why sitting alone or together with others in some kind of silence—even our not so silent practices on Sunday mornings—sort of a form of silence, is so important. I am learning it is not about me. I can wait. I can be patient. Even when things aren't going as I wish. I can watch, listen, yes, hope. But I don't have to obsess about all the little details. It's ok to let it go. Even if things go wrong from my perspective. It's ok.

Today is Pentecost. It's up to the Spirit, and the Spirit will blow and breath wherever she wishes. And it will be good. And we will all be fine. The lesson of humility has plenty of opportunity for growth. Every time we have to let go, we are reminded that it's not about me. And it will all go on ok without me, and you.

The fragile ego has such a tough time with that. So let us continue to practice letting the Spirit lead us. Personally, and communally. The greatest truth of all is trust. Trust that we are well in God's care. Trust that our children are well in God's care. Trust that our congregation is fine in God's care. Our community. Our nation. Our planet.

Sure, there are many things into which the Spirit invites us. Follow the Spirit. But before you do anything. Before I do anything. Be still. Allow others to lead—even in a different direction. Don't worry. There will still be love on the other end. God's mercy, God's peace, God's embrace will receive you and me—and it will be ok. The Spirit of God is here, and all is well. Amen.