

**Pastor Roy's sermon from May 24, 2015 (Pentecost outdoor service at Emmanuel)**

Every Sunday is Memorial day in the church. We remember and meet Christ in the bread and wine. We celebrate his resurrection each Sunday. We celebrate that life is never lost, that death never triumphs but is overcome by this life which never ends. Death only feels final. Death seems to eradicate hope and life and all that we love. In death, life is severely changed, reconfigured, detoured. One bodily presence ends others begin.

So much is shared among the living. It's more about "ours" than "mine." And yet we cling to "mine" as if we could actually keep something for all time. Nothing is ours to keep. We are merely passing through. Change is a gift from God which reminds us to love while we have the chance. To let go of differences which feel so important in the moment, but pale when compared to briefness of life and preciousness of each person. So every Sunday we have the opportunity to celebrate resurrection life in the life of this gathered community which we call the body of Christ. We have the chance to let go of our clinging and our offenses and woundedness and embrace one another as we discover and trust in eternal newness, eternal life, eternal hope. Each Sunday is Memorial Day, the celebration of life and love in Christ.

This Sunday we celebrate Pentecost in particular. We celebrate the Spirit visiting the church with courage and faithful service. We are set free in the Spirit as we confess that all of this is God's business, not ours. We trust in God's eternity rather than our life of fragile eating and breathing. The Spirit pushes us out into new kinds of compassion and love. The Spirit calls us to release our grasp. We are tempted to think we are called to convince people of certain truths. Is that not the Spirit's job? Is it not our responsibility to let go so that we may learn to love rather than be right?

The Spirit is the wind in the trees. Rain from the clouds. The Spirit is life in plants and animals growing. The Spirit is in humanity learning to live and to care for the earth—for the least among us. The Spirit is in the church serving with more concern for the wounded and broken than about its self-preservation—it's survival. Freedom is not found in security. Freedom is found in giving life away with abandon. Think about it. The Spirit sends as Christ sends, "Go forth, live the message, love the neighbor, and Trust, Trust, Trust! God is plowing hope, sewing seeds of life and peace.

We are called to remember Christ, to meet Christ, to share Christ's love. Not to convince anyone of anything. We are to love. We are to make friends. We are to love our enemies. Are we doing that, or are we to busy keeping score and saving face?

I believe love is the essence of Memorial Day as our country remembers it tomorrow. Life given for the love of those yet living. For Hope. For true freedom.

Today let us remember the Spirit at work in Pentecost, all around us in faith and mercy. In the church today as we live through holy chances and changes—as we make decisions for life in love. Let us remember Christ giving of himself. The seed of his own life released to give life to us--a mystery to be trusted, not explained but received with open hands and passed along to others. If we look deeply into the struggles and joys of our lives, we will find the Spirit working. In our congregations and selves we have the Spirit of Pentecost. Thanks be to God.