

Prayer of the Holy Spirit

Good Morning Friends!

We began our summer looking at our Inheritance...the family value that is passed on generation to generation...passed on to the NEXT... and we've explored how God has called us to share our story of God as an inheritance...the priceless story of love beyond measure, love that has no boundaries. And we've heard how God continues to call us to love and serve So That the next generation will know God and continue the story.

The invitation went out and We have shared a few stories... in our newsletter... and I have received several others. You still have time to share your stories so that we can share them with others beyond this faith community.

But what is most important is recognizing we, as a faith community, we are the ones to share what God has been doing and continues to call us to do.

Sometimes, we are called to go and do things beyond our wildest imagination. Like speaking in front of people!

Last week Alejandra Ferguson shared her story...a story that incorporates the blessing and promise of God just as Abraham received blessing and promise to go to another country and to make a home.

For Alejandra, the act of sharing required stepping out of comfort. For the hearers, maybe there was discomfort in connecting someone familiar to you to the current state of our country and its practices of receiving undocumented people - women, children, men, youth, and families. Even the connection of young school children coming home to discover their parent had been scooped up by ICE and they had no place to go but back to school may have been hard to understand.

So in hearing the scripture today, we find Paul seeing the town he is in... a new place...walking about observing...and he is appalled at the vast idols he sees, even an altar to an unknown god!

As Paul speaks, he connects with the people of the local place... perhaps that unknown God is the God who raised Jesus Christ... and Paul shares the story of resurrection and new life.

Paul, just like Peter & John, are empowered by Holy Spirit... so was Alejandra and so are we! It is our INHERITANCE as beings created by God, as God's children.

And as God's children & faithful community, we are called to participate, to respond to the nudges, to seeing the opportunities right in front of us even though these opportunities move us beyond our comfort zone.

So right now I invite you to turn to a neighbor (someone you do not live with or did not ride with today)... and share why (WHAT BROUGHT) you are here today...(30 sec each).

Now, SHARE WITH your person: who was the greatest influence in your faith journey? (I MIN EACH).

Maybe there is also a connection to family of faith... a community of believers... a church that helped to proclaim who God is and what God has done in God's created world. As was shared last week... there is the on-going work of God... the *missio dei* (Latin). Alejandra shared her story as part of the 'mission of God'.

I also want to share that *dei* in this phrase in Greek is often translated as '*it is necessary*'. So...it is not just that we are sent people, as Jesus was sent... but that our work as people within a faith community is to transform the world...to participate in bringing God's reign/kin-dom 'on earth as it is in heaven'.

So we must look at the nature of our work...our task as God's people and as God's instrument as a faithful community.

We are not made to go it alone, we are made for community...to usher in the kin-dom of God. So the church is to build up.. to nurture and sustain.. and to hold each other accountable in love and forgiveness. Truly, the church is a vessel which receives, holds, and pours out love and

forgiveness so that the world... local, regional, and world is transformed. The church is called to connect with the world around us and to share God's story so that new life springs forth in hope and justice.

God is calling us to grow, to bloom, to transform, all the while trusting in the Word to nourish and nurture the soil of our hearts and one another. The seed of new life is sown, we must TEND to the crop so it will grow.

**10 am Worship - - - MOVE TO BAPTISM now...**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, moving into our 228<sup>th</sup> year as a faith community-

How will we be part of building God's kin-dom? God empowers us through Holy Spirit...to have courage, boldness, and share our God stories. Think: What has God done for you? Who have you encountered that needed to be seen, listened to, and hear a word of hope in your story?

Remember... and realize that your journey of faith is NOT just for you!

Your journey is part of the story of the cosmos (the world God created)! These stories are designed to be shared so that we can be 'the city on a hill and let the light shine for all to see.' (Mt 5:14) May it be so! Amen.

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The inheritance of our faith is to attend to God. • To attend to God's work and witness in the world. • To attend to Christ's command to love God and neighbor. • To attend to the Spirit's stirrings deep within us and in those around us.