

Sunday February 12th 2017

Let Your Light Shine

Scripture: Matthew 5: 13-16

A Reflection by Peggy Jensen

Prayer: Holy God, our creator, we thank you for the light of Jesus Christ and the light for the way ahead. We pray that we may be a beacon of light within this congregation and community. We also want to add some spice to the work you are calling us to do together. Guide us in our discernment so we may understand each other better. Together may we become the salt and light that would have us be. May the thoughts and words that we share be your word for us today. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen

You are the Salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.

Great images and great responsibility.

Have you ever driven down South road on a dark night and come around the corner to find lights on at the church? If so you probably wondered why? Maybe you even thought you should check because this is your church. It was fun when the Christmas lights glowed in the dark. Actually, it is the warmth and glow of the people that carry the beacon. The bushel over the light could be some folk muttering and complaining about what's been happening a "that place". Your neighbours notice when the lights are bright and the good news stories are shared. This church is a beacon of light is this community and I am sure all of you want it to continue

I hope you noticed the salt and pepper sets spread around the sanctuary! I started collecting Salt and Pepper sets when I was in my teens. I had seen a collection in the coffee shop in Naramata and decided to collect them too. It has been awhile since I have looked at them but I decided it was a good metaphor for today. Please think beyond the health issues of too much salt, that is not the message for this morning.

Salt and Pepper together: First, I thought I should just put out the salt shakers. If there only one would you look for a partner? Partners like the United folk and Anglicans coming together. A good spice blend adds other spices too a few Catholics or Lutherans. All add to the flavor.

This community of faith is like Salt and Pepper, working together. Trying to understand the value of the other. Some younger folks, some older members. Some who have been here for decades and carry the history and treasure the good old days! Some new people who have come in the past 5 years or so bringing new ideas and experiences. Now you have a blending of traditions and new ways of being a Shared Ministry. S&P together.

Reminds me of the song: *Love and Marriage*, you can't have one without the other. Often the term "it's like a marriage" has been used to describe the next step in your relationship. You have been living together for over 6 years. Now the time has come to decide whether this is a committed, permanent relationship blessed by God. I know the relationship has God's blessing!

I have experienced the Spirit at work in many ways. It is still your decision though.

How do you discern God's will? How can you be open to where the Spirit is leading this community of faith? I have a great book Discerning God's will Together. I want to share this quote:

"Spiritual discernment makes operational our faith that an ever-present Guide is present to lead us in the way of truth and love as individuals and for this community of faith. It opens our sails as a church to the Spirit whose winds we believe are always blowing and will always move us closer to one another and the way God would have us be."

"To see the heart of the matter with spiritual eyes: from God's vantage point, to see beneath the surface of events, through illusions within human systems, beyond the immediate and transient."

The process of discernment leads us into the heart and life of the triune God. Think of discernment as three parts of decision making Head, Heart and Spirit.

Head ----This is the day the whole congregation looks at the Shared Ministry Agreement. A great deal of hard intellectual thinking and research had gone into this written document. There is a lot to think about and understand which is why we are talking today and this week.

Heart----- Where is your heart, how are you feeling? Is their grief over what was and will no longer be? Is there hope for new opportunities? What is your heart telling you?

Spirit--- God is the indwelling Spirit within each of us and in this community. The Spirit works within the individual and the community to bring to birth decisions and solutions that reveal the will of God.

Decision making can no longer be defined as doing what we, individually, think is best; it should be a search for the mind and will of God within a community of people where God is already present. Communal discernment is an important discipline. In a community of faith, Christian brothers and sisters pray for one another and the Holy Spirit's leading. Together they share and celebrate their different gifts which are woven into a tapestry of ministry. In community wisdom is uncovered and clarity is found. In community, support and encouragement is available and people should be able to share their thoughts and ideas in a safe and trusting environment. Each offering is vital to our life together in this community of faith. Therefore it is so important for you to bring your light and wisdom to the conversation. Together we can listen to each other and discern God's will for this community of faith.

Like Salt and Pepper we are called into this relationship to add some flavour and spice as we create this Shared Ministry. You are invited to let your light shine, do not put a bushel basket over your ideas and thoughts. Let all the lights shine together, that would really brighten South Road.

Let your light shine so that others may see the good work that God is doing through the people of this community of faith. Thanks be to God.

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