

Acadia Valley and Oyen United Church

Sunday, January 16th, 2022

2nd Sunday in Epiphany

Welcome and Announcements

Candle Lighting

We light the Christ Candle, aware of God around, among and within us. In a moment of silence, we prepare ourselves to celebrate God's presence in our community.

Our Gathering Song VU #603 In Loving Partnership We Come

Call to Worship

Sign of wonder at a wedding...

the gifts of Jesus go joyfully to work.

Sign of celebration at a wedding...

Jesus brings all that is necessary

to those whose resources have failed.

Sign of commitment at a wedding...

Jesus displays his best talents

with a compassionate and generous act.

Sign of God's glory at a wedding...

the influence of Jesus for good is seen and recognized. It will be recognized in our church and in our community.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We thank you, O God, that we can join together as members of the faith community, **celebrating the presence of persons from so many different backgrounds in the family of Jesus Christ.**

We thank you, O God, that we can join Christians of all the ages, **celebrating the trusted tradition of prayer, praise and joyful worship.**

We thank you, O God, that we can join with those who study the Word,

celebrating the inspiration of scripture, alert for the prophetic message, and challenged by the Way of Jesus Christ.

We thank you, O God, that we can join with those who put faith into practice,
celebrating the influence of Christian values, at home, at school, in the workplace, and wherever poverty and powerlessness are confronted. Amen.

Our Prayer for Grace

Loving God, you are closer than the breath that is within us, you know us better than our best friend.

You care for us more deeply than our closest family member, you desire us to be utterly faithful, and so

when confidence deserts us,

when energy for good leaves us,

when compassion abandons us,

when zest for forgiveness and justice cannot be found within us, you call us to reflection, confession, and new resolution.

Our Words of Assurance

All seeing, all knowing, all understanding God,

you challenge us, you enlighten us,

you call us to new ways.

The life which lies ahead for you will be joyful;

God's peace will be at the heart of it.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Hymn VU #382 Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Faith Story God's Tool Box

Scripture Readings

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (MSG) Spiritual Gifts

12¹⁻³What I want to talk about now is the various ways God's Spirit gets worked into our lives. This is complex and often misunderstood, but I want you to be informed and knowledgeable. Remember how you were when you didn't know God, led from one

phony god to another, never knowing what you were doing, just doing it because everybody else did it? It's different in this life. God wants us to use our intelligence, to seek to understand as well as we can. For instance, by using your heads, you know perfectly well that the Spirit of God would never prompt anyone to say "Jesus be damned!" Nor would anyone be inclined to say "Jesus is Master!" without the insight of the Holy Spirit.

4-11 God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful: wise counsel, clear understanding, simple trust, healing the sick, miraculous acts, proclamation, distinguishing between spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.

All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.

John 2:1-11 (MSG) From Water to Wine

2¹⁻³ Three days later there was a wedding in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. Jesus and his disciples were guests also. When they started running low on wine at the wedding banquet, Jesus' mother told him, "They're just about out of wine."

4 Jesus said, "Is that any of our business, Mother—yours or mine? This isn't my time. Don't push me."

5 She went ahead anyway, telling the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it."

6-7 Six stoneware water pots were there, used by the Jews for ritual washings. Each held twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus ordered the servants, "Fill the pots with water." And they filled them to the brim.

8 "Now fill your pitchers and take them to the host," Jesus said, and they did.

9-10 When the host tasted the water that had become wine (he didn't know what had just happened but the servants, of course, knew), he called out to the bridegroom, "Everybody I know begins with their finest wines and after the guests have had their fill brings in the cheap stuff. But you've saved the best till now!"

11 This act in Cana of Galilee was the first sign Jesus gave, the first glimpse of his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

May God bless to our understanding these readings from holy scripture.

Message Commentary on John 2:1-11

Hymn VU #506 Take My Life and Let it Be

Our Prayers

Merciful and loving God, we come into your presence today, hoping in some way to touch you, to see for ourselves the truth of your resurrection. Gather up our lingering fears and confusion, meet our doubts with compassion and understanding. Open our eyes to your love and grace surrounding us. Open our ears to hear you calling us to new challenges. Open our imaginations to new possibilities. Come anew to all who have known you but turned away from you. Help us to experience you standing in our midst, saying, "Peace, peace." May our broken world and our broken lives be transformed in your image. We offer our woundedness and turn to you for healing and newness of life, for you, O God, are our strength, our hope, and our salvation. All of these things we ask in Jesus name who taught us to pray together saying....

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,

for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Music and laughter, hands and mind, curiosity and compassion, what an abundance of gifts we have! All these gifts are symbolized in our offering. Let us commit ourselves in service, as we worship God with our offering.

Offertory Hymn VU #540 Grant us, God, the Grace

Offering Prayer

As we present our gifts, O God,

open our eyes to everything you have gifted to us.

As we share, O God,

open our hearts to the sick, the troubled, and the bereaved.

As we have been richly blessed, O God,

open our minds to the way in which we can be a blessing to others, as Jesus was a blessing to us. Amen.

Hymn VU #424 May the God of Hope Go With Us

Benediction

May God's voice always be in my ears.

May God's words always be in my mouth.

May God's love always be in my touch.

May God's light always be in my eyes.

May God's song always be in my heart.

Song for the Journey VU #967 Three Fold Amen

Changing the Christ Candle

In the light of Christ, shining into all corners of the earth, showing us where we are and where we are meant to be.

The Spirit of God. Breathe it in.... and know that God is with us where ever we may go.

Have a great week and celebrate God's presence!!

God's Tool Box

Scripture

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. **1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NLT)**

I have a tool box full of tools. I imagine you have a toolbox like this around your house, don't you? Why do you suppose we need so many tools? It is because each of these tools has a different purpose. There is no one tool that can do everything. If I needed to drive a nail into a board, what tool do you think I would need? Right! I would need a hammer. Here's my hammer. If I were putting together a bookshelf and needed to put in a screw to hold it together, what tool do you think I would need? You are right again! I'd need a screwdriver, and here it is! Let's see, suppose I needed to measure something, what tool do you think I would need. Of course, I'd need a tape measure. I wonder if I have a tape measure in here? Yep, here it is. What if I needed to drill a hole? Sure, I would need my drill. It is important to have the right tool for the job.

The Church is like God's tool box. God has a lot of jobs to do and he has given the people in His Church different gifts and talents to help Him to do those jobs. We are His tools! To some he has given musical talent to help lead others in worship. To some He has given the talent of teaching so that they can help others to learn more about Him. There is no one person in the church that can do everything, is there? Listen to what the Bible says, "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us."

If I needed to tighten a screw in my glasses, would this hammer help? Would this great big screwdriver help? No, I would need this little tiny screwdriver. You see, it doesn't matter what your talent is and it doesn't matter if you are big or small. What does matter is that when God has a job for you to do, you need to be right there in His toolbox, ready and willing for Him to use you.

Look around you. See this house of worship? It is God's toolbox. Look at all the people in this room. They are God's tools. Each one ready and willing for God to use them to do his work in this community.

Lord, we thank you that you have given each of us special abilities to do things for you. We pray that when you need us, we will be ready and willing to do what you need for us to do. Amen.

Commentary on John 2:1-11

Roy Harrisville III

John begins his Gospel with the famous prologue, the appearance of the Baptist, and the calling of Jesus' first disciples.

His baptism is not actually related by the evangelist, but rather told in third person by the Baptist. The calling of the first disciples is narrated and in much more detail. The miracle at Cana is Jesus' first public event at which something miraculous occurs. John even points out to his reader the significance of the miracle.

Cana is not in Judea. It is in Galilee. Galilee was known for its thieves, rebels, and Gentiles. It was in Gentile territory that Jesus made his adult home and performed his first miracle in the Gospel of John. From the very beginning therefore, Jesus is portrayed as a trans-national figure in the Gospel. His life and work go beyond the boundaries of race and nation.

This is a private miracle, subdued and quiet. It is not some flashy show of divine power. Only a few people, including the reader, know what actually happened. Jesus was even reluctant to do anything at the event. It was not meant to happen, but the persistence of his mother led him to perform what has become one of the most famous of his miracles.

The hosts ran out of wine. The wedding celebration would have ended if there was nothing to drink. Mary mentions this to her son and he replies with a sentence that has puzzled scholars. Is it a rebuke? Is it a mild objection? Is Jesus being rude? If so, his mother doesn't seem perturbed by it and tells the servants to do whatever he tells them. She was always a woman of faith who believed in her son.

Jesus' hour had not yet come. His hour refers to his death, resurrection, and ascension in the Gospel of John. It was too soon for wondrous

events in Jesus' ministry. Yet, he still performs a rather large miracle. The stone jars at the wedding would have been huge containers capable of holding eighteen to twenty gallons of water each. There were six of them. Not only was there enough wine for the whole village now, it was better than what had first been served. It is at the end of the story that we read the meaning of it and the significance of timing, faith, and glory. The head-waiter made the ironic statement that the good wine had been saved "until now." Of course, this is a symbolic way of saying that Jesus is better than what had come before. He is the apex of God's glory. In God's own timing the Messiah had come. When the guests were getting parched and the host nervous, and there was no recourse but to shut the party down, it is at this point that Jesus quietly intervenes. It may not have been the most convenient time for the Lord, but because of the need of the guests and the request of his mother, he will do what must be done, for that is why he came.

God is responsive to people's needs. He is not aloof to the human plight. Even if he is inconvenienced by the request, his heart is larger than the stone jars. Some have come to question the divine response to human suffering and have concluded that there is no God. But this quiet miracle belies that conclusion by suggesting that sometimes God does His work without taking out an ad in the paper.

Indeed, as we will discover throughout the New Testament, Jesus does his work in such a fashion that it is often misunderstood and misrepresented. God has in fact responded to human suffering in the suffering and death of his only Son. It's just that many are not satisfied with the response.

Faith is the purpose of the miracle, as it is in all the miracles in John's Gospel. Faith is the reason John wrote the book (20:31). Faith is why we preach. Sermons are not political essays designed to enlighten the rabble and produce enough guilt to get them to recycle their wine bottles, but to communicate faith in Jesus Christ. Good works are by-products of faith. Faith is not a matter of coercion but of wonder at the miracle of Christ. It is an overwhelming gift in which the Giver Himself resides.

Without that power, without the Giver in the gift, all attempts at recycling and good works would be for nothing for they would be based upon the wrong premise of utilitarianism, self-preservation, or the like. But with faith in Christ as the source and meaning of all good things, whatever we do will be done for the proper reason: out of thanks to

Christ for filling our lives.

This quiet miracle is the manifestation of Christ's glory. But no one actually saw it. Nor was there a thunder clap to herald the event. God's glory is not what humans expect it to be. His glory is not for mere display, but has the purpose to fulfill his service to his creation. He buries Himself in a quiet tomb to do his work on Easter where no one can see or hear. As Martin Luther said, "God hides his pearls in a pile of dung so the devil can't find them."

In Christ, the very nature of glory is being redefined. It is glory with a silent purpose and aim, to create and maintain faith in Christ Jesus who responds to human need in ways that seem hidden and mysterious, but whose deeds are open to the eyes of faith.