

Hello Dear Friends,

This Sunday we celebrate the birthday of the church—PENTECOST. The sermon title is HOPE WE MUST CARRY.

**“Hope we must carry, shining and certain  
through all our turmoil, terror and loss,  
bonding us gladly one to the other  
till our world changes--  
facing the Cross.”** (vs.5 MV 28) --*Shirley Erena Murray*

This weekend some of the restrictions have been lifted. I'm sure the golfers are especially happy! And there is definitely much **more hope** as people get vaccinated and the numbers continue to go down. **We are so hopeful** that June will be the month we can gather again in the sanctuary and praise our Holy One in prayer, word, song & fellowship. I hope we can have our Annual Meeting June 20, before the summer break.--But stay tuned --we shall see what the rules are in 2 weeks. We want all of us to be safe & follow the medical directives.

Have you been working outside—cleaning the yard --or planting a garden. I usually try to have a vegetable garden. It started when the kids were young --& we didn't have much money. We did all kinds of things to provide for our family of 4. Even ate rabbit and Bill fished in the Sydenham River. But they were good days—we lived off the land. Each Spring, one thing I find difficult is to rototill the garden. We have 2 rototillers—one is big & heavy—difficult for me to maneuver. The other is smaller—built for a lady --so I was told. My problem is—I can't get them started. I do the choke, pull the cord. Maybe it turns over a bit. Just enough to think maybe this is it—It is going to start--Then—silence. I get very frustrated! Usually I end up calling Bill—will you help me with this machine??! This year--& I have noted on other occasions—He gets this little can, gives it a shot—spray & presto—the motor is purring! Amazing! A miracle. There is such hope in that little spray can.

I think Pentecost was like that—something ignited the whole group—gave them a kick-start—like fire—like wind & the Christian movement seem to take off. The power of God's Spirit gave energy & force to empower the people—for unbelievable travels, (particularly by Paul,) their preaching & the healing—the Christian faith is world-wide—more than 2000 years later---amazing! Jesus didn't travel but 20 miles from home!

In the WORD for today, **READ the scripture page John 15:26-27; 16:4-15** and also read in **The Acts of the Apostles 2:1-21**: “When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.”

The religious celebration of Pentecost has its roots in the OT and continues to be observed in both Judaism & Christianity. The name comes from pente—meaning 50. It is 50 days after the Passover for the Jews & 50 after Easter for Christians. It amounts to about the same time. We read that the apostles & others have gathered in Jerusalem for the Pentecost feast & really have lost their direction . To their great sorrow, Jesus was crucified & ---although they know he has risen, they are awaiting further instructions. The new leadership has not been established. And they are powerless—they need a kick-start. A shot of ether—to get them going again. That they can begin to till the soil & plant the seeds—for the growth of the Christian community—that will come.

We have become familiar with the metaphor for Pentecost—the Spirit is like the rush of a violent wind, It is like tongues of fire—flames And it is mysterious—not always under control. Sometimes overpowering—like lightening in a storm --& sometimes gentle—like the murmur of a

dove's song. In our Song of Faith (written in 2006), there is a description of the Spirit: p. 28 It says: "We sing of God, the Spirit, faithful & untamable, who is creatively and redemptively active in the world. The Spirit challenges us to celebrate the Holy not only in what is familiar, but also in that which seems foreign. The Spirit breathes power into scripture, bestowing upon it a unique place in the life of the community. The Spirit judges us critically when we abuse scripture using it as a tool of oppression, exclusion, or hatred.

We sing of the Spirit who speaks our prayers of deepest longing and enfolds our concerns and confessions, transforming us and the world. ---The power & grace of God's Spirit.

**In John 15:26-27; 16:4-15**, it is Jesus, himself speaking before he leaves his earthly life. He wants his followers to know that the Spirit of Truth will always be with them to remind them of his teaching & this Friend will always comfort—and challenge them. Indeed, they will continue to be Gathered, Upheld and Sent out. (GUS). They are (& we are) the ones to carry the Hope of God to the nations. --in our time & place. "Hope we must carry".

What is it that kick-starts us --in 2021? After the Pandemic is over? What is the spark that ignites us? **How will we be inspired to carry God's message of hope?**

Indeed---"Hope we must carry." AMEN!

**Our Prayer:** " Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living. As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving, **Spirit, open my heart.**" Holy God, we give thanks for your powerful, loving Spirit that is always our companion. You faithfully give us comfort, joy, healing & peace--- and then send us forth to bring the hope & love of God to all we meet. ---For this, we give great thanks!. Amen.

For the **MERRY HEART:**

1. Sorrow looks back, worry looks around, and faith looks up.
2. You're a good person, but **don't wear you halo too tight.**
3. It isn't difficult to make a mountain out of a molehill. -- just add a little dirt.
4. The mighty oak tree was once a little nut that held its ground.
5. The tongue must be heavy indeed, because so few people can hold it.
6. **If the grass is greener on the other side of the fence,**  
-- you can bet the water bill is higher too.
7. God gave the angels wings, and humans chocolate.

We received a note **from Rev. Jane Van Patter** this week. "As president of the ARWRegion, I find that I am a retiree of no fixed church address at present. When wondering about where to give my church offering going forward, it occurred to me that I could give an "Offering" at each church I visit this year. I have since discerned that I make a greater impact by taking the sum total of those offerings and giving it to the UCC Mission Service Fund later in 2021. The donation will include an acknowledgment of the congregation in ARWRegion."

Jane goes on to say she appreciated our Mother's Day service that was on-line. "No matter who we are, we are all unique, beloved, children of God. Amen to that!"

Take care.

Stay in touch.

Be at Peace.

In Faith & Hope, Annalee

