



WEEKLY STUDY June 4 -June 11, 2023

(Use this guide to individually or with a group dive deeper into this week's worship.) We continue the theme into June: "God of the **MOVEMENT**." The play on words is intentional. We believe in a God of movement – calling us forth, sending us out; the ebb and flow of discipleship. And we believe in a God of the moment. We believe in a God who speaks to us here and now, all day long, through other people, Scripture, nature, signs and wonders – in moments both large and small.

Our scripture is: Acts 2:42-47 (NRSV)

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

- 1)** In the calendar of the Christian Year, this Sunday is called "Trinity Sunday". It celebrates the mystery of faith in and of the Holy Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some congregations continue the celebration of the Holy Spirit, continuing to dwell on the strength given to us, the comfort provided to us, and the knowledge of God's love that sustains us through the Holy Spirit. In our Tuesday night Bible study on and off we've had discussions about the Trinity. For some, it has proven to be a very difficult concept to grasp. For others, there has been an acceptance of the doctrine of the trinity without concern. We, along with most Christian faith traditions, affirm this concept of "three persons, one essence" and it has been part of Christian doctrine since the 4th century.
Question: What are your thoughts about the Holy Trinity? How would you explain this to someone new to the Christian faith?
- 2)** I'm amazed at how often a scripture reading that I feel I've read a hundred times, gives me something new to think about. With Acts 2:42-47, I feel I've mostly focused on the selling of possessions and sharing among the believers. When I read the scripture this time, what really spoke to me was, (they) ate their food with glad and generous hearts.

It made me stop and ask myself, “How often do I eat my food – or take a shower – or relax in a comfortable chair – with a glad and generous heart?” It was a good reminder to consider routine acts each day with a grateful heart, remembering that not everyone has the most basic comforts of life.

Question: Re-read this week’s scripture. What stood out to you as you read the scripture?

- 3) In his sermon, Rev. Hollis told about being in college and asking his professor how what was described in Acts 2:42-47 wasn’t communism. He told us that his professor did give him an explanation, but also said to him that the description could be viewed as a little weird. He then told us his professor said, “If we as the people of God aren’t doing things that appear sort of weird, we may not be following the teachings of Jesus.”

Question: What teachings of Jesus – if we followed them – might make others describe us as ‘weird’ but truly get at the message of Jesus?

- 4) Rev. Hollis talked about a current issue in our world. This generation of youth and young adults are both the most connected through social media and yet the loneliest generation. He said, “What we made need is more “us”. More connection one with another. More community as illustrated in the scripture with the descriptions of the life of the early believers.

Question: In what ways do you experience community at Belle Meade UMC? In what ways do you see us offering community to others?

Prayer

(This week’s prayer is the Affirmation of Faith we used on Sunday in worship)

“God of peace, show us what it means to live as people of unity. Show us what it means to live in community with one another. May we be transformed into people of wild generosity. May this generosity bring others in, too. God of abundance help us trust you with our resources that we may be quick to give what we have until everyone’s needs are met. Amen”

Weekly Challenge: Look for those who might be lonely and offer community to them.

(Weekly study guide prepared by Rev. MaryJane Pierce Norton)