

Sermon for 26 May 2024 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore

Trinity Sunday/Peace with Justice Sunday

Scriptures: Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29 (P. 761); Romans 8:12-17 ; John 3 :1-17

What makes you believe in God ?

This is the Sunday of the year when that question is the focus.

It is a loving question, put forward by your friends.

We call ourselves the body of Christ. All year we have told stories and done things to show Jesus is alive, and well, and living in us.

God is that close.

Sometimes that is good; sometimes that is sad. We know all about it; and we never finish it, even when we die. In fact, this story has been going on for over two thousand years ... and it comes from a story much older than that, as we read in the first book of the Bible.

How close is this story to you?

Please tell me. Listen, now. Someone just did. "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I! Send me!'"

Then we all said together, "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty!"

God became real as we spoke.

Then we read, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God."

And to explain that, we said with our fathers and mothers and all our friends here together, the words that make us a church, a part of the living body of Jesus. Listen as we say it together again, with everyone here: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life."

This is what we say on this last day of Eastertide, and all the other days of the year. Jesus lives among us, and we live with him through the Spirit of God among us. Amen.

We finished our Bible lessons for today with a beautiful story about a man who wanted to understand this, and who came to Jesus to ask him about it, one night. We listened to Jesus explain it and to promise that he and all his friends could understand and believe this soon after Jesus died. Those were his words, that we just said together, and he added this to make sure we remembered that this was good news, no matter what happens, always: "Indeed, God

did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

That is the message of Trinity Sunday.

Never forget it.

Let us pray:

Dear God, here with these friends, give us more comfort in what believing has already taught about loving ourselves and one another. Help us be brave about who we are, and even when we get hurt or angry or sad, always to start over in the softer and better direction of kindness. What Jesus learned, what your love did for him, is what he always shares with us. This is what we already know, here, among these friends; and we, too, that our purpose, our job is always to share this teaching with others. That is the story we love to tell, and to practice, in Jesus' name, on this day, and always. Amen.