TEACHING TUESDAYS:
SIGNS OF PARISH VITALITY
UPLIFTING & INIVITNG WORSHIP

"Come unto me you who are depressed. And you who are oppressed. Come unto me you who are hungry. And you who are angry. Come unto me you who are unemployed. And you who are underemployed. Come unto me you who are anxious. And you who are frantic. Come to the place of blessings, where you will find respite, peace and joy." Liturgies from Below pg. 32

Acts 2:1-4, 12a Inclusive Bible

"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they all met in one room. Suddenly they heard what sounded like a violent, rushing wind from heaven; the noise filled the entire house in which they were sitting. Something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each one. They were were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages as she enabled them... all were amazed and disturbed."



Recording:

Here is the entire recording of our Teaching Tuesday session of May 18th, 2021.

Notes:

In honor of Pentecost we made art and asked the Spirit to settle with us and guide us for the next hour. We began with the framing of our page, drawing in dark ink or color along the edges to create a space in which we will be making some art and capturing our notes. Why? Because that's the work of uplifting and inviting worship, creating a space where something sacred can occur, deeper love and connection between us, one to another, and between us and our God.

Of course, worship as a word covers a lot from our corporate gatherings to our private prayers, meditations and singing songs with God on our commute to and from work, and to taking a hike to soak up some time with God's good creation. But for our purposes and discussion today, we are talking about those special times when we gather as members of Christ's church with those guests and seekers who find their way to us, by our invitation or by the Spirit's prompting. Are we prepared to create a space for us and for them, a space in which are are all able to safely and genuinely grow in love for God and for one another? We shared some time in breakout rooms, asking these questions: ***What part of worship resonates most with you and lifts your own spirit? What part of worship might be prepared to do that most for a seeker, a guest?*** And later, ***"What churchy words or phrases do we only ever use in worship? And what words or phrases might we use instead?"***

The Episcopal Church stands in a special place right now; we are poised to create new spaces in which the Spirit might guide us into some of the richest and newest expressions of our faith, worship and liturgy ever seen. It is exciting that we have such a rich tradition and foundation on which to build something uplifting and inviting for folks who don't know church. We can joyfully and faithfully lean into our vernacular principle, that the words of faith should be expressed in the language and words of the people, to find new ways to express our ancient truths and forms. We're drawing a lightbulb in prayer, asking for that tongue the flame to settle upon us, for our own lightbulbs to go off with creativity and discovery.

As we prepare worship, how can we adjust words in bulletins and vocabulary to better engage guests and seekers? Words are important, and we have a goal to better convey meaning accessibility. Can music be seen as a language and used to bring into the worship experience by using a variety of styles and music which more recognizable? Can our messages be crafted to better intersect with current concerns in personal and civil life to create more impact and illustrate the rich value of scripture and faith? These are the questions we bring to the Spirit and ask for us and our guests to be amazed, maybe even "disturbed" as they were in Acts chapter two.

Previous Weeks' Recap Documents with links and resources:

Week One on Compelling Mission and Vision.
Week Two on Clear Path of Discipleship.
Week Three on Faithful Financial Practices.
Week Four on Inspiring & Capable Leadership.
Week Five on Welcoming & Connecting Ministries.