

Devotion Third Week After Pentecost 2021

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

First of all, thank you for making Aisha Brooks-Johnson and her mother Debbie feel so welcome Sunday. They were in awe of the entire service. Fred did his usual warm welcome and after the service talked to them about the facility, and they were so impressed by that. Aisha got to speak to Philippe and Celestine and share her ancestry, which includes Togo and Benin. Philippe declared her a relative! Alisa did a beautiful job of leading us in music, and I was struck by the wonderful solos in the anthem. You women rock! When we sang hymns and the piano and organ came in together, it was like we were going to lift the roof of the building with song. Singing without masks sure makes a difference! So thanks to Alisa, Eliot, Dinah, Kathie, Jenn, and Serena for wonderful music. And thanks to Mary and Connie who faithfully put out refreshments each Sunday so we can have fellowship together. That has become a popular event, as you all greet each other and catch up on the news. And Serena brings these awesome cookies – each week a different kind!

It was so good to see folks back for the first time – the Thigpens and Darrell Youngblood. And the service keeps moving back to normal – we took up the offering and were able to thank God by singing the Doxology. I hope some of you will come help Fred on June 26 take off all the icky yellow tape and clean up the pews. We will then have a wonderful day on June 27 with our Independence Day picnic. Fred and crew are cooking burgers and hot dogs, so just bring a side or dessert – cole slaw, potato salad, baked beans, pasta salad, chips, cookies, pie, cake – whatever inspires you! We will worship in a sanctuary restored to its normal look and then have fun in the fellowship hall eating together for the first time in over a year. Remember to bring pictures of family members who are or were veterans – and let Connie know the name, service branch, and relationship to you. Connie will put them out on tables so we can appreciate them as we eat lunch.

We hope to have monthly luncheons together this year and to get back to celebrations like Hanging of the Greens and a live Christmas concert. As we return to normal, we still know that this is a new normal. COVID is still around and not everyone feels as secure as we do. But I hope all of you who have been hesitant to come back return as soon as you can. We miss you!

We talked about fear in Sunday School. We've been so afraid of this virus for so long, and it feels so refreshing to be relieved of most of that fear now. We have other fears – mostly the ongoing violence in this city which seems to be everywhere around us. So I continue to pray to God for an end to situations where people feel the need to pick up a gun in anger. I'm reminded of this text from Romans 8 we looked at Sunday:

“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? ...For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Know that you are part of a faith community that seeks to show the world that the love of Christ lives in our hearts, and may this week allow you to show that love to others.

Jeanne