

## **Devotion, Week of Pentecost, 2023**

### **Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

Thank you to everyone for wearing red last Sunday to celebrate Pentecost, and for all the wonderful food offered for lunch afterwards. I think eating a meal together is one of the more important things we do as a church community. It allows us to visit and catch up on news, and to just celebrate being a family. It was a day to celebrate our veterans and family members who have gone before us, as well as Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Kaylynn's high school graduation!

As I mentioned in the service, when I was growing up, we would go to my grandparents' houses to celebrate "Decoration Day." Families would meet and clean up the cemetery, decorate the graves, and then we would all have a church picnic outside together. I can remember walking among the graves asking my parents to remind me how all those Huffmans and Kellers and Carswells were related to us. It seemed like we were related to nearly everybody in the cemetery – and we probably were, since this is a small German community that for years has married within that close geographic area. It was hard to keep track of all the ways my parents and other relatives were related not just once, but several times across family connections. It was comforting somehow, to know that when I sat down with 16 Huffman aunts and uncles and 20 first cousins, that even beyond that group there were 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and who knows how many other layers of cousins. Jim says that's why we're all a little wacky – too much inbreeding!

Debbie Bray probably has a similar story to tell – as she took me through the church cemetery when I first got there, she kept saying she was related to this one and that one until I finally asked her – "are you related to everyone here?" And she said "yes – probably!" And of course, that doesn't count the Huies and others in the older Philadelphia/Huie cemetery that she is also related to.

I hope you will be able to visit with your extended family this summer and enjoy a good meal of homemade goodies together. We'll meet for breakfast on June 6 at Eggs Up and picnic together on July 2 to celebrate Independence Day, while we listen to family stories and celebrate the heritage of our country and the founding families of Philadelphia Presbyterian. Thanks for letting Jim and me be part of your family.

*Jeanne*