

Feb 26/23: "Renewed Community" Acts 2:1-4, 14, 37-38; 41 -47

1. On Sunday Tim shared a couple of words and images he has been prayerfully discerning were from God for our church community. They were:
 - a) A message through an interpreted tongue and the significant presence of a bird – "Behold I am doing a new thing – let me in"
 - b) A vision given to a GTA Pastor of revival in the city of Toronto as little brush fires across the city.
 - c) The "bird" flying into our church during the Bishop's sermon inviting deeper partnership with the diocese in whatever the Spirit is calling us to.
 - d) An image of a bird hovering over our church flapping its wings. Like a billow fanning into flame the embers of our faith.

What stood out to you in this that was either personally significant or corporately significant?

There will likely be a diversity of responses to this first question. Some may not necessarily have experience navigating such realities and may put up barriers to opening up around it in discomfort. I would encourage you as you likely do each time you gather to prepare for your time of discussion deliberately in prayer that the Spirit would be given freedom in your conversation.

As with all of these questions, if something comes up that would help all of us discern what this might mean, please do share it with me (Tim) I would be delighted to engage you around this.

Read Isaiah 43

2. Many have been drawn to Isaiah 43, in particular vs. 19, after hearing this story. What do you think might be the significance of Isaiah 43 in helping us understand the new thing God is doing that we are invited to let him in to accomplish in our midst?

There may not be something in this text that resonates with your group – so if nothing comes to the surface feel free to press into the next question.

While Tim acknowledged that sharing these things was simply an act of obedience with no clear sense of where it was all going we do have clarity from the record of scripture what it looks like when the Spirit of God comes upon a community.

Read Acts 2:1-4; 14, 37-38; 41-47

3. (42 – 47) What five things does the spirit bring a community to be devoted to? Where do you see our need at Little T for more of the infilling of the Spirit of God? For more of his work to devote us to one or more of these things in balance in unison with one another?
- i) *Devoting themselves to the apostles teaching – literally the apostles doctrine – meaning their convictions around the person and work of Jesus. Everything in the life of faith begins and ends with clarity around who is Jesus and what has he come to do.*
 - ii) *Devoted themselves to fellowship – kononia in Gk. – this presses us in to mutual love for and accountability with one another – our small groups have as their goal this kind of love and prayerful accountability – there may be wisdom here in making this question specific to the life of your small group.*
 - iii) *Devoted themselves to selling their belongings and giving to those who had need – deep social compassion and concern.*
 - iv) *Devoted themselves to worship marked by awe, joy, and generosity.*
 - v) *Devoted themselves to evangelism – so contagious was their life together that the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

To varying degrees we are committed to each of these things for this flows out of our ecclesiology, our theology of the church. As an act of obedience we do these things because this is what we believe the church is meant to do.

I would suspect your conversation will bring to the surface things we do well and things we do not.

The Spirit brings us to be devoted to each of these things in balance and in unison with fruit that is all out of proportion to the activity itself. How? By making Jesus real to us. By pressing his love down into our hearts, recreating his love and joy in us, making his victory over sin and death an utter assurance – making his presence as real to us as the presence of the person sitting closest to us.

4. From this text it appears that the means by which we receive the work of the Spirit is through repentance and trust. As you reflect on that reality what do you believe the Lord may be inviting you / us to repent of that the Spirit may be given more and more freedom to work in us, in our church?

This is a question that presses you and your group to deeper openness and mutual accountability. As a leader you set the tone so I might encourage you to have an answer prepared for this question so that you can invite your group to go there with you.