

THANK YOU ROBERTA FOR INVITING ME TO SHARE A WORD THIS MORNING. THANK YOU TRINITY FOR ALLOWING ME TO WALK THROUGH THE PRESCRIPTION WORK AND TO BE IN CELEBRATION WITH YOU TODAY. I have gone back and forth with how to present my words for you and felt it was better to share it as a letter/email. TODAY'S MESSAGE WILL BE IN A LETTER, PATTERNED BY SOME OF LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIANS.

LET US PRAY.

I, Judy, have been called by God and sent by Jesus to serve as the coach for Trinity United Methodist Church. I send this letter to you in God's church at Trinity in Eugene, OR. I include in my greetings all who will hear these words and a special greeting to Pastor Roberta, who is your spiritual leader. It has been meaningful and spirit filled 15 months. I celebrate with you the work that you have accomplished during this time. When I think of you and the work that we have completed together, I am often reminded of the many ways we seek renewal, both personally and through our church.

I think of the ways that I want to be renewed or different. How many of you have entertained the thought of being renewed...make changes for the better?

There are days that I want to be taller rather than on the shorter side, especially when I can't reach the top shelf. Some days I want blond hair and blue eyes. I think you understand what I am trying to say, even if you never have thought

about it, you get it. We see it through television , social media...it's out there. To renew is to make something new. "the replacing or repair of something that is worn out , run-down, or broken".

When our team did the consultation some 15 months ago, one of the questions that we asked the people we interviewed was "if I gave you a magic wand and you could wave it and change anything. What would you change? Many people sat there for a few seconds, but once they responded it was with passion and excitement. Wonder what each of you would have said?

But we know....WE KNOW WE CAN'T WAVE A MAGIC WAND AND MAKE CHANGES THAT INSTANTANEOUS.

A couple of morning a week, I wake up and turn on the television to find an info commercial about Cindy Crawford's amazing beauty secret. It doesn't matter how many times that I have seen this advertisement , it still catches my attention. Of course I want to look like I did at 28.

The other night, I was reading a post by a friend on Facebook, who has found this incredible face cream that will remove her wrinkles and make her skin smooth and younger. She says that she believes in it so much that she is going to become a consultant. The replies to her ranged from, too expensive, I love the product to It didn't work for me, to but they have a good return policy. We want renewal but we tend to confuse renewal with going back and doing or being what we were years ago not renewing, revitalization or transforming. What does church renewal mean? What have you, here at Trinity discovered in your

journey of renewal? There are hundreds if not thousands of good books written about church renewal. You have probably read several of them yourselves during this process. As long as the church exists, there will always be a need for renewal. When I think of all the work you have done here at Trinity, I am reminded of many scripture passages, but particularly the passage in Luke 4:16-21. This passage follows Jesus time the wilderness and his temptations.

Jesus has returned to Galilee “powerful in the Spirit” Eugene Peterson’s translation. The news spread that he was back, he taught in small meeting places to everyone’s acclaim and pleasure. He came to Nazareth, where he grew up. And as he always did on the Sabbath, he went to the meeting place. He stood up to read, he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He found the place where it was written:

God’s spirit is on me. He’s chosen me to preach the message of good news to the poor, set me to announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind. To set the burdened and battered free and to announce, “This is God’s year to act”

Short and sweet . To the point ! He made two very important points in his sermon, 1. He was filled with the spirit and 2. he has a clear mission. You have heard the saying, “Don’t just talk the talk, walk the walk”. This is what Jesus did. He took these words the streets, he healed the sick, reached out to the marginalized, woman at the well (offered her living water) set an example of the children, (must become like the children to enter the kingdom). Gave sight

to the blind, he preached to the hurting, he showed compassion and acceptance to everyone. He fed thousands. People who were oppressed were freed by his words and touch. Later in his ministry, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, gave birth to the church. Acts 2:1-4 DAY OF PENTECOST. The Holy spirit came from God to continue the work of the ascended Christ, as promised to his followers. The Holy spirit that inspire us, challenges us, guides us and gives us the gifts to be in ministry to our community people-world. I see many of these gifts in you Trinity. gifts of wisdom, hospitality, leadership, service, prophecy just to name a few.

Then Jesus says Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled that day. The reaction was pretty good, for a minute it appears people really accepted his words.

Then it got bad, the audience got mad, becomes angry when Jesus suggest that his message is good news to the gentiles like Naaman the Syrian. The got so angry they threw him out. The hearers did not want to share their privileges with outsiders, but Jesus' words were intentionally focused upon the marginal members of society, the "poor" the "captives" "blind" and the "oppressed". How often do we see this in our churches? World? The words are beautiful until it requires us to be uncomfortable, love people who are not like us. Trinity, I give thanks to God for the spirit to which you faced the challenge of identifying the persons that God has called you to be in ministry with. Through the prescription process, you have identified who Jesus is calling you to care for, offer compassion to, to feed, both physical as well as spiritual. You have identified and claimed your ***mission is to form disciples of Jesus Christ as you gather in love, grow in faith and go out in hope to transform the world. You have***

answered the question “who are you gathering in love?” every single person (all people) are encouraged and welcomed at Trinity, but as you reach out to form new faith partners as a community of faith, focus will be on River Road neighborhood and dual parents families with children preschool-high school. You also answered the question “What are you going to transform in the world?” You are going to transform the lives of people you come in contact with, by providing a loving and radically welcoming space...You will empower people to explore their spirituality and deepen their relationship with God, others and the world. Church renewal begins and ends here, with a strong mission that is aligned with Jesus mission. Trinity, you have a clear vision of what God wants for you in the place, at this time. The spirit of God is here.

You have gone a step further by completing the third prescription and that is aligning all the ministries of Trinity with your mission statement. Not only the ones you have now, but also those you are praying for the future that will be aligned with this mission. You have developed a more effective way to communicate with each other. You have created new ways to relax together and spend time getting to know one another.

As much as I want to look 28 again, reality is that I can look the best I can right now. Trinity, as you continue to be a church in the River Road community, always remember renewal is not as the world sees/experiences renewal, it how God sees renewal, always seeking the steps and answers through the power of God's spirit. Beginning where you are now.

It's time for me to move on, so I close with these final thoughts and words,

Thanks be to God for you the people of Trinity United Methodist Church, faithful servants of our Lord and Savior. Be cheerful, keep your spirits up. Continue to focus on God's calling for you. Greet all you meet with the love of Christ.

I give thanks to God, for the opportunity and the privilege to work with you. You, Trinity have shown me what a church can do and what a church can become when you open your hearts to God's moving Spirit. You were/are willing to step out of your comfort zone and work tirelessly, to bring the Kingdom of God to this community. Continue to boldly proclaim your mission and walk the walk..continue to seek renewal, finding new ways to reach the unchurched and spiritually feed all.

Now I quote Paul from his words to the church in Corinth.

“ May the amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you” 2 Corinthians

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Your Clergy Coach and new friend from the South,
Reverend Judy Piercey

