

“The Spirit Calls Us to the New”

Isaiah 48:18, 19; Acts 2:1-11

May 23, 2010

<sup>18</sup> "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. <sup>19</sup>Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (*Isaiah 43:18-19; English Standard Version*) It is through the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives today that God in Jesus the Christ is doing a new thing. Our challenge today is to be open to the call of the Spirit, stand in courage trusting that we have been equipped by the Spirit for such a time as this, and move forward knowing that it is the Spirit who goes with us.

Our text from Isaiah and even that of Acts challenges us to “remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.” There are memories which can sustain us such as the loving memories of holiday family gatherings, going to our favorite fishing hole and just putting our feet in the cool water while basking in the warmth of the sun upon our face, that one perfect day in which we looked upon the face of our children and were absolutely awestruck by the gift God had given to us. Memories that sustain us as Christians are those of the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ which are our foundation and our guide in the company of the Holy Spirit.

Yet, memories can also trap us. In Counseling we refer to these as the “broken record” which plays repeatedly in our heads. You know the ones that say we are not good enough, smart enough, or which tell us that God would “never” call us to that place -- the memories which cause us great guilt and fear. In the church that memory is often death dealing, “But we’ve never done it that way before” or “That’s not how the former minister did it.” Memories can cause old wounds to reopen and fester; they can not only trap, but also divide us. Memories cause us to long for the good old days when if we but only take a moment, we realize that there really wasn’t

any more good in those days than there are in these days perhaps. We had the love of family and friends then just as we do now. We had the gifts of God's love, mercy, and grace just as we do now. We had the gift of the Holy Spirit, just as we do now. We get so stuck in "remembering" that we cannot be open to the gifts of the Spirit today. We get stuck in the "remembering" so much that we lose our hope for tomorrow. We get stuck in the "remembering" such that we cannot live into the promise of God, "<sup>19</sup>Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

My sisters and brothers, the question for us today as we move forward individually and communally as Christ's body in Peace United Church of Christ, is this "Can we lose our memories long enough to make room for God's new goodness?" <sup>18</sup> "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. <sup>19</sup>Behold, I am doing a new thing [in the breath and the gift of the Holy Spirit]; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" Amen.