

Pastor Roy's Cover Letter (June/July/August 2016 Newsletter)

We recently celebrated the festival of Pentecost. We can spend the rest of the church year unpacking this festival of the gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit gives all of us gifts. These abilities, opportunities, interests, and passions are our way of serving God and all of God's creation. They bring joy. They inspire the people around us with hope and peace. The gifts of the Spirit are God at work in the world through and in us—not in ways that crush us, but in ways that build us, and everyone around us, up.

Sometimes, in confusion and grief, we struggle to find joy. We try so hard and find sorrow instead. Where is the joy? By joy I don't mean some kind of flimsy happiness which comes from things, or having events go my way. Joy is not convenience. Joy is not about "pulling off" the perfect plan. Joy is not good outcomes or success.

Joy is finding one's way into the Spirit's gifting. Joy is learning to be whom God created us to be. Joy is relating to others and creation with freedom and faithfulness. Joy is growing into the gifts God gives as an outgrowth of who we are. To let go of what we "should" be, and embrace the love which flows through us because of who we are. This is God's gift of the Spirit. Here is the working out of our salvation. Here is joy.

Our gifts are as varied and natural as our personalities and dreams. The long season of Pentecost (through the middle of November) is your invitation to consider your gifts and how God calls you to live them. Listen to your true self and her or his gifts. Your gifts are part of you. They are uniquely you, and go with you as you journey through the seasons of your life. You are God's gift to this world!

God help us to appreciate our gifts--to faithfully receive and practice them, with joy.

Pastor Roy