

Spiritual Gifts

*4-11 God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful: **wise counsel, clear understanding, simple trust, healing the sick, miraculous acts, proclamation, distinguishing between spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.***

All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.

~ First Corinthians 12:4-11 (The Message)

Dear Faithful,

"It is better to have an enthusiastic fisherman than a reluctant weaver."

No, that is not a quote from Proverbs. It is a quote from my son Joshua when he was eleven and I was trying to impose a spiritual or Lenten discipline on the family. I don't know where he comes up with this stuff! But he was right on point in a lot of ways. (I can say that now that ten years have passed!) God does want us to be happy in our work. Joy is in fact a fruit of the Spirit and a sign of being on the right path—in the right ministry.

According to St. Paul, our ministries are the ways in which we both proclaim and portray God to the world. God is not a chore! Therefore our ministries should not be approached as such either. Ministry is Incarnation when it becomes an expression of our spiritual gifts! When our ministries do not inspire the love of God in ourselves or others either like we had hoped or perhaps like they once did, then we need to stop and take a step back from them. This is not a failure but rather an act of faith! Paul assures us that God decides who gets which gifts and when and we need to be open and faithful in exploring all of the possibilities with God.

Lent is the perfect time to do this work because it is a time of inward journeying and outward expression of what we have learned. It is a time of letting things die in order for new life to arise in our midst. It is a time of asking hard questions of ourselves. When am I a reluctant weaver? What do I need to let go of in order to share my real spiritual gifts enthusiastically? What are my real spiritual gifts?

Everything we do at St. Peter's is a ministry. Everything. Clergy, staff, or laity there is not one thing we do as the Church that is not reflecting who God is. So imagine what kind of awesome God we could embody if we were all living into our spiritual gifts! At our annual meeting, I challenged us to work toward that--to be intentional ministers by discerning our spiritual gifts both individually and as a congregation. I also handed out a spiritual gifting inventory. If you did not receive one or need a new one, there are copies on the information table (the round table) in the Parish Hall. Please take the time to fill it out and

then come to one of the forums to score your work and to discern in community what it all means.

Due to my slow recovery from whatever bug that has been gripping me, I am canceling the first forum scheduled for this Sunday February 14th. If this was the only one you could attend, please let me know so that I can get the scoring materials for you. The other two forum dates are **February 28th and March 13th** following the 10 o'clock service.

In the meantime, see you in church!

Enthusiastically yours,
Jeanne+