First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica

September 6, 2020 • In-Home Communion • Online Worship

"More Than Meets the Eye: Changing Seasons"
Homily by Rev. Patricia Farris

2 Corinthians 5:6-7, 16-17
So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight.
From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

The title for this morning’s homily, the third in our “More Than Meets the Eye” series, is “Changing Seasons.” It comes from that last verse we heard Jamie read—“everything old has passed away. See—everything has become new!”

I was sketching out this theme just a few days ago when the weather was nice and cool. “Fall is in the air,” I thought. The light at dusk is a bit different; there’s a slight change in the air. Growing up in Phoenix, I learned to detect even the slightest indications of seasonal change. Nothing at all like a major dramatic shift you’d see in other places I’ve lived, like Minnesota and Delaware where Fall comes in with leaves changing into glorious colors and geese flying in formation overhead.

But then, as we know, summer came back with a vengeance, as it’s doing here in Southern California for the Labor Day weekend. So please try and stay cool, everyone, and remember to hydrate! It may be too hot this weekend to feel like we’re on the cusp of Autumn, but it will come, just as new life is stirring up within us.

Of course, the Apostle Paul isn’t talking about the weather or the four seasons of the year. He’s focused on the life of the spirit within, the new creation in Christ Jesus, a new season in our hearts that comes at any time of the year when we wake up to what God is doing within us.

Don’t we know that sometimes in the midst of this pandemic, it can seem as if life is on hold, like we’re stuck in some horrible season called “Coronatide” that wasn’t on anyone’s calendar. We didn’t see it coming way back in March and we can’t yet say just when it will end.

Yet Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians remind us that in the midst of it all, God is even now doing something new, giving birth to the New Creation. And, when we reflect just for a moment, we know that, really, our lives can never be “on hold,” because our consciousness, our spirit, our faith is alive in us. The Spirit of God is working in us to bring forth a new creation, always ready to turn a season of spiritual dullness into a springtime of new life and new hope.

In a few minutes, William Martinez will be singing and signing a beautiful song called "When Love Was Born." It’s about the birth of Jesus, but it’s not just a Christmas song. It’s not confined to any one season. It’s about the birth of love, joy, and hope that changes us and changes the world. It speaks of "the holy spark" that God sends to turn the page and change the season in our hearts, love come down for you and me.
It's that same holy spark that in a few moments will change the bread and cup into the new life that comes to us in the sacrament of Holy Communion. God changes our focus from the “what is” of this moment into the rich bounty of joy that God intends for us in the new creation.

And it's all More Than Meets the Eye. It's about walking by faith and not by sight, as Paul puts it. Walking by faith and not by sight. Faith—the assurance of things hoped, the conviction of things not seen. Seeing, not with our eyes, but in the imagination of our hearts, sensing our lives, our friends, our foes, our world, transfigured by the light and love of Christ Jesus.

We can be confident that new seasons are on the way. May the love of God bring a new season of faith to our hearts. May the sacrament encourage us and change us this day.

And together, let’s walk by faith in the power of God into the New Creation that is God’s gift...this new season that, through God's love, is always new—the New Creation, bringing transformation and renewal. Let us walk by faith into this new season, confident that the hope we're waiting for comes, again and again, to change us, to change the world forevermore.

Amen.

Notes:


Mark Shultz. “When Love Was Born.”