



May 31, 20120

How Steady is your Flame

Today is Pentecost! The remembering of the Holy Spirit pouring out upon us and thus marking the beginning of the church. Some congregations wear red and pull out all the stops adorning worship spaces full of red, yellow, and orange as visual reminders of tongues of fire. Some moments with children involve singing happy birthday to the church. Pentecost Sunday can be filled with great celebration and then...it's over.

Like so much in our culture, we go all out for the big, splashy moments and find that when it is all over, we exhale until the next year. Our flame burns bright, bold and full of energy. But does it last? How steady is your flame? How do you grow in your own faith so that the fire of Pentecost is more like an eternal flame that lasts long term?

As we grow spiritually and our relationship with God deepens, our supply of substance burns more like the pilot light on a gas stove instead of a barn fire. That pilot light may be a small flame, but it is steady. When ever we need more flame all we have to do, is turn the knob and access that small flame to the capacity that is needed for the task at hand. Barn fires are far more exciting. They can be seen for miles. They give off great heat and they are beautiful when handled with much caution. But they aren't eternal. They do not last.

In these three months that I have been serving you as the Interim Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call, I have been in contact with many congregations in transition. During this season of much global unrest, some have thought this part of our ministry has probably come to a halt. Not so. Pastors come and go, congregations are still searching for the one God who is calling to join them in their next season of ministry and in spite of the process needing to change a little, search and call continues.

What I have noticed is indeed a heightened sense of urgency. In the midst of that anxiety, I remind people that God is with us and the Holy Spirit is present in the process. Even if your congregation isn't in a search and call season, I am sure there has been some anxiety. The concern about when to return to buildings is becoming almost more anxiety producing than when we were all preparing to lock the doors. This is when I hope you will remember that pilot light, that eternal flame. The small, steady, ever burning flame doesn't give out. How are you tending to the spirit within you so that you will be able to endure this season that is filled with exhaustion, stress, anxiety and for some...fear?

Are you praying? You could join the Weekly Prayer Pause at noon on Wednesdays. Are you reading the Bible? You could sit with the scriptures you heard on Sunday throughout the week. Are you continuing to engage in service? You could write a note to someone or make a phone call to check in on another person. Are you continuing your stewardship to the church? You could continue to support the ministry through online giving.

The steady pace is what lasts for the long haul. Most of us like to go wide instead of deep. However, it is times like this when we need a faith that is deeper than wide. We need a more meaningful relationship with God. Oh, I know some of you have attended more things online than you ever have. It can be exciting and inspiring. But are you stopping to savor those spiritual moments? Are you resting in God's presence or are you speeding through virtual reality as fast as you ever did your days back in February?

The steady, ever enriching journey of faith allows us to drink deeply from the cup of the one who gives us everlasting life.

So, go ahead and have a blast celebrating Pentecost! Dance with the spirit. Sing and rejoice for the church is alive and well! There is nothing...not even a pandemic that will kill the church or our faith. And remember...keep it steady now. We do not know how long the journey will be. Keep it steady and the eternal flame will be ready within you for whatever comes.

Blessings and Peace,
Susan

Rev. Susan Minasian, PSEC Interim ACM for Search & Call

National Youth Event—Interactive Digital Experiences

Like so many other events in the Year of the Coronavirus, the live NYE event has been postponed, with online opportunities taking its place this summer. Live chat opportunities will accompany the premieres of two original NYE videos on YouTube: "Loving Your Neighbor in Quarantine," **Sunday, May 31**, and "Creativity and Justice in Quarantine," **Sunday, June 28**. One of NYE's organizers, the Rev. Trayce Potter, minister for youth and young adult engagement, will host the chats – both to be held at 4 p.m. Eastern Time.

The live video premiere and chat for **May 31st (today)** will take place at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/uccvideos>

A "culminating interactive experience," taking shape now, will be held online Friday, **July 24**, and Saturday, **July 25**, Potter said. She encourages people to watch for details and registration information soon at the NYE website (uccpages.org/nye2020).

