

Living the Seasons at Home

Based on the lectionary reading for this week

May 16, 2021 – *Join The Witness*

Lectionary Readings for this Week

Acts 1:15–17, 21–26 the focus for this week Psalm 1 1 John 5:9–13 John 17:6–19

Read

Acts 1:15–17, 21–26

or the story “Choosing an Apostle” over the page, from SeasonsFUSION.

Something to think about, talk about, or do

The question for each of us is how to be witnesses in our time with our talents and gifts.

Vocation begins by asking the question, “Am I doing what God wills for my life?” and having the courage to hear and act on the answer. It is to know ourselves and to allow the Spirit of God to empower us. Whatever we are called to do – a minister, a salesperson, a mechanic, a florist, a teacher, or a businessperson – God gives us spiritual gifts with which to build up the Body of Christ and to reflect God’s presence in the world.

Frederick Buechner captured the essence of call and faithful response in *Listening to Your Life: Daily Meditations*: “In the year King Uzziah died, or in the year that John F. Kennedy died, or in the year that somebody you loved died, you go into the temple if that is your taste, or you hide your face in the little padded temple of your hands, and a voice says, ‘Whom shall I send into the pain of a world where people die?’ If you are not careful, you might find yourself answering, ‘Send Me.’ You may hear the voice say, ‘Go.’ Just go.”

Think about your “lot” or purpose in life. What is your calling?

“You know everyone’s heart.”

How do you make decisions? In this story, the followers of Jesus pray and roll the dice as a way of discerning who will be added to the eleven apostles. What combination of head, heart, and gut do you employ in making your own decisions? How do you invite God into the process?

Peter outlines the qualifications for apostleship: have been with Jesus since Jesus’ baptism by John and must have witnessed the Resurrection. Given women were with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry and witnesses to the Resurrection, what difference might it have made to church history if women were among the names proposed?

Together this week

Talk about your shared prayer life. Who usually leads the prayers and what resources are used? If you were to pray for your friends, what would be included? Create a new family or group prayer for use this week.

Prayer

Holy God, we offer our prayers to you in faith and trust. We know you hear us. Thank you. Amen..

Choosing An Apostle

Based on Acts 1:15–17, 21–26

Peter was feeling impatient. Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for something new. And here they were – waiting and praying. Waiting was hard for Peter. He was usually quick to respond to people or events. He was the first to declare that Jesus was the Son of God at the Transfiguration, first to try walking on water to Jesus. Now he was eager to tell about Jesus' being alive in a new way.

“We need to get organized and name someone to replace Judas who betrayed Jesus and is no longer with us,” he thought. “We need twelve disciples to represent the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Then Peter hesitated. Jesus had chosen Judas – how would they choose his replacement? It could not be just anyone. Then the answer came to him, and he stood up to make his announcement.

“Someone who has been with us during all the time that Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken from us – one of these must become a witness with us to Jesus' resurrection. “

After much conversation, two names were suggested. Joseph, called Barsabbas, also known as Justus, and Matthias. How could they choose between them? How would they know which one God would choose? Peter discussed the situation with the others, and they decided God would show them. They would pray and then cast lots.

They prayed, “God, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”

We are not sure exactly how they did it, but perhaps they put a stone representing each man in a jar and shook the jar until one of the stones fell out. When that happened the “lot fell on Matthias.” He was the one who would be an apostle.

The word “apostle” means one who is sent on a mission. Matthias' mission was to tell and show Jesus alive in a new way.