

I was prompted to look for something on my computer and stumbled on a sermon from 2011
As I read through it, the message spoke to me personally and hit home—so I want to share it
I think it fits where we are today, although with a slightly different emphasis

Lately, I've been drawn to the middle—to what is going on in the in-between spaces
Particularly with scripture because I think we rush the story to the happy ending
And is so doing miss the message of the process and of the struggle
Messages that speak to our sense of not knowing next steps

The disciples and others gathered in the upper room to wait as Jesus asked
Scripture doesn't give us much detail about those days of waiting... only a few hints
NRSV Acts 1:12-15 then Peter led them in the process of choosing Matthias
Vs. 14—*All these were **constantly devoting themselves to prayer**, together with
certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.*
Something about that sounds tidy and proper... the saints are gathered

Eugene Peterson gave a bit of a different flavor in the Message Bible
Message vs. 14—*They agreed they were in this for good, completely together in
prayer, the women included. Also Jesus' mother, Mary, and his brothers.*
More process is felt here

But I want us to think a bit about those days and read between the lines...
First of all they were afraid—I don't think we really grasp how great their fear was
Jesus had been crucified as a common criminal and head of a rebellion
Were they next?
Part of what they did was work out their fears and sort panic from true fear
Talk through how to protect themselves—lock the doors, be careful, etc.

Regular conversation began to take place—
Reminiscing about the past, wondering about the future
Retelling the stories and seeing them with new meaning
Wondering how it is all going to unfold
What are they waiting for? What does it mean that the Holy Spirit will come?
How will it be different?

Sense of wanting to be together with others who understood and had common experiences
Good to coalesce in this room together while waiting
It wasn't just the disciples—but 120 so that included many others
An enlarged inner circle
During all of this waiting, I think they gathered as a people
They were less divided

Leadership formed and developed—beyond the 12
Someone took charge in the kitchen and others found their place
Divided up chores that had to be done
They began to be intentional in the process of waiting—doing what needed to be done
See Acts 6:1-7 where disciples increased and 7 were chosen to serve

Conversation was constant and varied, from the big deal to insignificant
From talking about what is important to them
to retelling stories they heard in town, like hearing about Judas and how he died
In the conversation, things begin to take shape
My guess—vs. 15-26 grew out of the conversation, rather than Peter just did it
Someone named that they were only 11 disciples now and asked if we need 12?
Some said no, others yes—someone remembered scripture
Psalm 109:8 “may another take his place of leadership”
And it fits with the Jewish sense of a 12-fold witness

What qualifications are needed? Jesus isn't here to choose someone
It must be someone who has been with us since the beginning
And someone who saw Jesus after the resurrection
Someone who was a witness to all that has transpired
Two people were proposed as possibilities...

Then Peter **named** the emerging sense of the conversation
They prayed about it and chose Matthias

During this time of waiting, unseen things happened
It wasn't an empty time; it was a time of transformation
A time of preparation for what was next
A time of things becoming settled and ready

We often assume that we wait until way forward comes to us fully formed—*then we go do*
Rather it begins with considering possibilities
Conversation
Discussions
Dreams
Talking it through
Trying possibilities on
Finding what is real and resonates
More conversation

In time way forward gels and begins to take shape
We recognize it as way for us
And we see that it is already in process, we're doing something
There is movement, albeit slow

We at North Seattle Friends Church have gathered in the upper room...
Not just the leaders, but all of us are together in this
We are a solid God people—God is here and we know God
We are faithful and committed
There really isn't a peripheral that doesn't get it
We are “*in this for good, completely together in [Christ]*”

So we wait in the upper room— But what do we do in this waiting?
Things are happening—yet nothing is happening!

It was June 6, 2012 when we got the first serious indication that U Prep was interested in our property
Before that there was a "would you ever sell?" - "yes if the price is right" conversation
In the last 3 years, 4 months lots has happened
Negotiated win-win with the Tool Library and U Prep
Tool Library has been open for 3 years now and is successful
U Prep seriously wants to buy our building
We've located potential land and are having a conversation with an architect
On the other hand—here we sit and feel as if we are in limbo

This is actually a vulnerable time for us—huge potential, yet it isn't a "thing" yet
Alice Maxson named it for us last week—
The Evil One doesn't want us to succeed
There is no better time for us to be destroyed than now
When this thing for us, isn't yet a "thing" out there—it's unknown
With deaths and people moving away, we are smaller in number
Temptation for us to feel inadequate
We must pray protection around what God is doing
We say NO to the Evil One
We say NO to being inadequate for God's Leadings
We say YES to following God step by step, wherever that goes, no matter how risky

I think it is a time of conversation as we explore together the possibilities
A time to put things out on the table together and see what resonates with others
Some ideas will fall away, while others grow
I'm feeling pulled towards...
Ideas that stick will tell the truth of us and of our collective energy
They will be right sized and doable

It is a time to try on ideas, like we try on clothing—to see what fits and looks good
It's ok if the ideas don't fit; now we know something we didn't know before

Where does this conversation take place? Everywhere!
Some is intentional community conversation—like Meeting for Business
Meeting with our architect to see what is possible in the 15th Ave location
Other conversations will happen in twos and threes without any planning
Some conversation will be in small groups that gather for any number of reasons
Some will be during worship and much of it after worship

Another lesson we learn from Acts 1 is to gather together and Listen—expecting God to Lead us
This is a time to pull together and stay together
A time to be intentional about being present to one another

Truth is—God is with us
God is calling us to movement and has created within us the very desire to move
While we don't have clarity about the journey ahead of us, we have some inklings
And we all recognize that God is present and has created this "thing" that isn't a "thing"
Now we are gathered to Listen together
And to begin the conversations so that the Leading can take shape...