

St. Paul's Congregational Church
May 27, 2018 Trinity Sunday
Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-17
Mysterious Encounter
The Rev. Cynthia F. Reynolds

Let us pray: may the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Have you ever had a glimpse of God's majesty and power and awesomeness? Seems to me we use that word – awesome – so often these days – I wonder if maybe that's diminished the power of that word - we usually say something is "awesome" when we're impressed or enthusiastically approving of or appreciating it, but are we truly struck speechless, or suddenly made aware of our inadequacy, our smallness? Probably not often enough – I remember seeing for the first time the picture of earth taken from space – that beautiful blue globe – remember that? It could take your breath away.

Maybe the pictures of the eruption of the Kilauea Volcano in Hawaii stir you – I have a friend who serves a church in Hilo – he's posting pictures of flames, lava flows, civil defense updates on his facebook page – the power of all this takes your breath away. That's awesome.

The birth of a child – that miracle of new life – it takes your breath away. And I'm remembering the first time I was honored to be present with a family at the time their mother who was also a dear, close friend of mine – died. Another example of new life that day – that instant of standing with one foot in the now and the other in eternity – all surely in God's presence – looking into the mystery of God's love - this truly took my breath away. There were no words.

Think about a time when you have experienced, glimpsed God's awesomeness.

I've had a song running through my head all week that I learned one summer at an inner city Day Camp – wish you all could have heard 50 children singing it– the words are simple:

Our God is an awesome God he reigns
 From heaven above with wisdom, power and love
 Our God is an awesome God

That was awesome – a profound faith statement by those children: sung with energy and joy and such meaning.

Children have such a great sense of mystery, don't they. They enter into it – they wallow in it - they don't overthink it – we have much to learn – actually, maybe relearn from them – maybe that's what our observance of Trinity Sunday reminds us. Trinity Sunday is about who God IS – a God who reigns from heaven above in power with wisdom, power, and love.

Just yesterday I received from one of you a great email: an explanation of God, written by an 8 year old boy, Danny, who lives in Chula Vista, California. Listen and enjoy Danny's explanation of God:

'One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.'

'God's second most important job is listening to prayers An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.'

'God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.'

'Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista . At least there aren't any who come to our church.'

'Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K.' And God did not let Jesus stay in the grave, but raised him from the dead.

'His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.'

'You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.'

'You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God!

Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.'

'If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.'

'But...you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases.

And...that's why I believe in God.'

On this week's observance of Trinity Sunday, our reading from Isaiah brings together a portrait of a majestic and truly "awe-some" God, limited as these words may be, and yet at the same time, it also portrays a God seeking assistance, or at least seeking an agent to do God's will and to carry God's message. We always say we're called to share, to live, the good news – and we hear Isaiah responding in the midst of awe, here I am. Send me.

Danny understands that, doesn't he.

God has a task, a word, a path for us too – as disciples and as church. This reading from Isaiah speaks to us, as individuals and communities of faith – when we are complacent, focusing on maintenance or even to just plain survival, rather than thinking of the glory of God – our call to faith and service. God's call to Isaiah and Isaiah's fearful but faithful and humble response, leads him to his true identity as God's servant, God's creature, God's child.

And we will be lead as well to our true identity – as God's servants called together in ministry here at St. Paul's. That's such good news, isn't it.

How will we respond? What is our experience of God here? And how do we share it with those who are beyond our walls, those not – or no longer part of this community of faith? Indeed, how much is God a part of our everyday thoughts? How much time and energy do we give to expand and deepen our understanding of God, our images of God, our experiences of God? Maybe if we expand our hearts and minds so we can encounter God in fresh and new ways, maybe we will discover anew the awesomeness of God who reigns in heaven above with wisdom, power, and love.

How has God touched your life? How has the Spirit been leading you lately? Where's the wonder? Where's the sense of the awesome in your life? In our life together? It's all around us, if we let ourselves feel it and experience it. And then we can't help but share it.

Please – take some time to reflect on these questions in the midst of this weekend of remembrance. Remember the awesomeness of God – savor the awesomeness of God – be touched by the awesomeness of God. Think of what God has done for you, for us.

And then listen for God's call to you, to us.

God is calling us – may each of us answer, here I am. Send me.

Amen.