

THE MAGNOLIA MESSENGER — Double Issue

Volume 3 Issue 22

May 30, 2021



Special points of interest:

- * *The Keys to Success!*
- * Crossword — *Plays!*
- * Announcements — The Easter Season, Family Worship, and more!
- * Pentecost - 2021
- * Liturgical Colors and Misc.



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The Keys to Success — Graduation 2021

Graduation is an exciting time. It's a time that you have looked forward to for years. How many times have you said, "*I can't wait until I graduate because then I will be able to _____*" (Fill in the blank) *Guess what?* That time is almost here. It's taken you 18 years to get here, which means:

- You have been in school now for 2,160 days.
- You have spent 12,960 hours in classes.
- That translates into 777,600 minutes.
- You've been around 216 months. (216 months / 12 months = 18 years!)
- You have been breathing for 936 weeks.
- You've been here 157,248 hours.
- You've been living in this world for 9,434,880 minutes.
- You've slept 52,500 hours.
- You've watched T.V. for 12,173 hours.
- You've spent 7,488 hours eating. (Mostly pizza!)

If you cannot remember High School, then consider that by the time we are 70 years old, the Bible puts it... 3-score and 10, you'll...



- **Sleep** - 24 Years
- **Work** - 14 Years
- **Play** - 8 Years
- **Eat** - 6 Years
- **Drive** - 5 Years
- **Talk** - 4 Years, though some may exceed this by a considerable amount!
- **Go to school** - 3 Years
- **Be Sick** - 3 Years
- **Study and Read** - 3 Years

Most of you were born around the year 2,003. I'm guessing that you were Wrinkled, Red, Bald, Toothless, could barely see, Crying, Complaining, and had no clothes on. As the old *Virginia Slims* commercial used to say, "*You've come a long way, baby!*" And throughout that time, you've had some successes and

some failures; they are both a part of life.

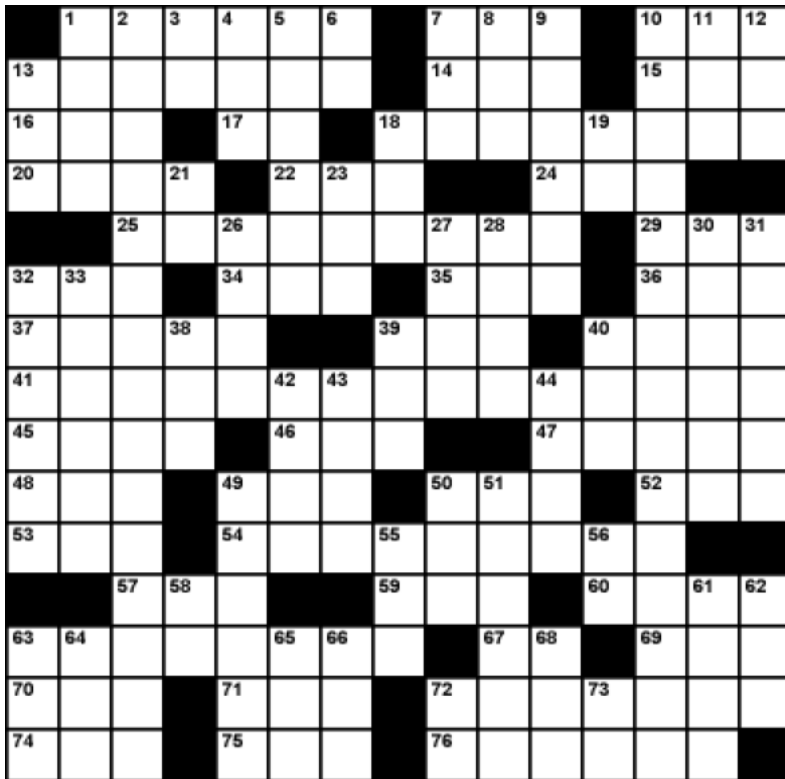
And now, you've reached the time that most of you were looking forward to, graduation! It's an exciting time, but there will be many challenges and temptations along with the excitement. These things can steer you away from your dreams, goals, and even your faith. So this morning, I'd like to share some thoughts with you as you prepare for this next major life event.

To do so, I brought my key chain, and although many of the keys look similar, only one will open the door to the Parsonage, and only one will open the door to the church, etc. Each one was made to the exact specifications for the intended door. The original key, and any copies made afterward, followed a specific pattern that ensured the key would work. That key started out as smooth as the blank key I have on this chain. Similarly, you were able to etch out a different sort of "key" that led to your success in high school. I know this was not totally your own doing because you had some help along the way like all of us. Throughout the years, your parents, teachers, friends, and others helped you to develop the habits, or, to use the "key" analogy, cut the needed grooves that allowed you to develop into the young men and women you are today.

Although the key to your success in college, marriage, and beyond might have some similar-looking cuts and grooves, you are now going to a brand new level of learning, living, and life experiences. This *blank key* represents each of you as you begin this next leg of your journey in life. Just as a blank key is placed next to the original to make a working copy, so you too will

Continued on Page 4

Plays— Crossword Puzzle



Across

1. * Playwright of "Peter Pan"
7. Haggard novel
10. Item worn by Monica
13. * Play of 1928 by #9D: "____ Interlude"
14. Promissory note
15. * Member of the great theatrical Lupino family who found her fame in the movies
16. Hemp shrub
17. Word before Gratin
18. * Partial title of a play that's part of Neil Simon's autobiographical trilogy
20. Accordingly: ____ turns out
22. Heavyweight champ
24. Ostrich-like bird
25. * George Bernard Shaw play of 1923
29. Maple Syrup base
32. Type of program on the WWW
34. Forlorn
35. Cdn. City: Sault ____ Marie
36. Consumed
37. * Shakespeare wrote it, Hamlet said it: "To be, ____ to

be..."

39. Guido's note
40. Jillian and Landers
41. * Famous play that has the characters Estragon and Vladimir
45. Never: ____ point in time
46. Table scrap
47. Flynn of Flicks
48. Customary Observance, minus the "ual"
49. Compass point
50. Lifesaver, for short
52. Single
53. Lah-di-____
54. * George Bernard Shaw play of 1913
57. Record label
59. One Time connector
60. Accompanying
63. * Ugo Betti play of 1927: "The ____"
67. Sodium Symbol
69. British gold medal runner: Sebastian ____
70. French coin
71. Once Lifetime connector
72. * Star of the movie

version of the musical "My Fair Lady" (Which is based on the play at #54A)

74. * "A Night at an ____": Play of 1916 by Irish playwright Edward J.M.D. Plunkett (Also known as Lord Dunsany)
75. * Stoppard the Playwright
76. * Desired military command, in Neil Simon's "Biloxi Blues", for example

Down

1. Heat quantity measurers, for short
2. * Lorraine Hansberry's critically acclaimed play of 1959
3. Sun God
4. Genetic stuff, for short
5. * Tennessee Williams play of 1961: "The Night of the ____"
6. Cummings the Poet
7. * Title for the Playwrights at #1A and #32D
8. Word with Polloi
9. * Mr. O'Neill who wrote "Beyond the Horizon" (1920)
10. * Play by William Shakespeare
11. * Shakespeare comedy: "Much ____ About Nothing"
12. * George Bernard Shaw play of 1894: "Arms and the ____"
13. Health resort
18. Trinket, minus the "ou"
19. Metric unit of length, for short
21. "Thanks" to a Brit
23. Company abbr.
26. Heard in Music Class: "Miss, ____ the seventh tone of the diatonic scale?"
27. Norwegian capital
28. Essential oil (var. sp.)
30. Heard in the Theater

District: "I think we should go to the show ____ this time because the tickets are usually less expensive."

31. * Francis Beaumont play of 1607: "The Knight of the Burning ____"
32. * Playwright who wrote "Private Lives" (1930)
33. Certain payment, with "Ex"
38. Prefix that means "Ear"
39. Newt
40. Heard in Kindergarten: "Class, what is the first letter of the Alphabet -- ____ B?"
42. Snoopy
43. Mr. Louganis
44. Old Spice?
49. * Play of 1941 written by #32D, with "Blithe"
50. * Animal that is part of the title of a Tennessee Williams play
51. * Gore Vidal play: "Visit to a Small ____"
55. Partners for Pas
56. "That hurt!"
58. Abbreviation with Everest
61. Ripped
62. Biddy in the Barnyard
63. Electronics acronym
64. Charged particle
65. Co-producer of the U2 album "All That You Can't Leave Behind"
66. * Shepard the Playwright
68. Primate mimmer
72. It goes with "Gotcha!"
73. "Summer of '69" singer (Initials)

June 2021 News and Announcements



Annual Conference is just around the corner! June 2nd-4th at the Hot Springs convention Center! Here is the official information about this event!

The 2021 Arkansas Annual Conference will be held June 2-4, 2021 utilizing a hybrid format that will allow participants to gather either

in-person in the Hot Springs Convention Center or online via Zoom. Both those who attend in-person and by Zoom will have the ability to fully participate in every aspect of the Conference, including voting and speaking to the entire Annual Conference.

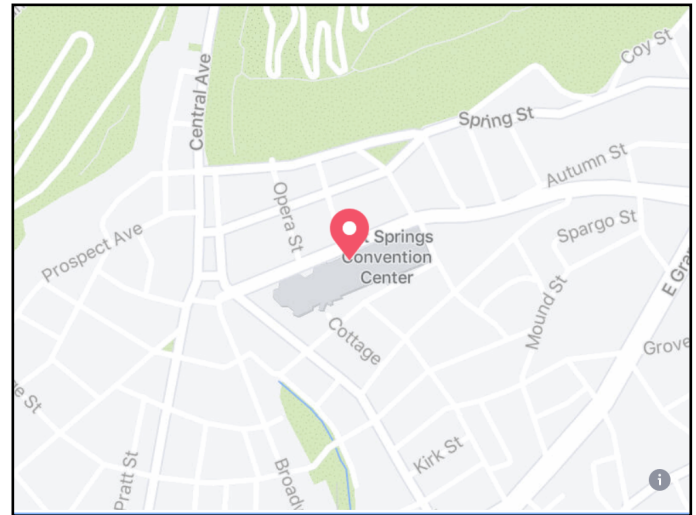


Of course, the Bishop and Annual Conference Planning Committee will continue to monitor appropriate COVID-19 trends and vaccine distribution data, and make decisions about adopting a different format should conditions warrant. As we draw closer to June 2, updates will be issued via email and on the Annual Conference 2021 webpage. Information regarding lodging, petitions and resolutions (deadlines for submission are March 15) is already available and full registration will be open in early April.

The 2021 Annual Conference is being planned carefully so it will be a safe gathering. This will include adhering to the current real-time COVID-19 guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas Annual Conference. It also means many of the usual meals, displays and gatherings will not be held.

We, as Arkansas United Methodists, have been at our best as we have lived out ministry and our connectional life together in extraordinary times. This has required

responding and adapting to quickly changing circumstances involving the pandemic. At this point, the uncertainties that exist as we prepare for this year's Annual Conference can be frustrating for everyone. Please be patient, continue to extend grace to each other and **#LiveWithLight** as we look forward to this year's Arkansas Annual Conference. Learn more: <https://arumc.org/ac2021/>



Blessings,

Pastor Gary

Crossword Puzzle Solution - "Plays"



The Keys to Success — Graduation 2021

need a good original from which to copy to make you the best you that is possible!

So, let me describe a few of the most basic cuts into this new key that will give you the best possible chance of success in the coming years:

I. The first Key Cut is to: Face Your Fears (2 Timothy 1:7)

We are all afraid from time to time. Some people are afraid of storms; some are afraid of birds or animals; some fear not being accepted or a fear of not being liked, or a fear of failing. We all have fears, and it's not wrong to have fears. What is wrong is when we let those fears begin to control us. It becomes wrong when we become consumed by fear. When we start to live in a constant state of fear or don't do important things because of fear.

There was a test conducted by a university where 10 students were placed in a room. Three lines of varying length were drawn on a card. The students were told to raise their hands when the instructor pointed to the longest line. Nine students had been instructed beforehand to raise their hands when the instructor pointed to the second-longest line. One student was the test subject. The usual reaction of the test subject was to put his or her hand up, look around, and, realizing that he or she was all alone, pull it back down. This happened 75% of the time, with students from grade school through high school. This one person would go along with what everyone else would say. **Why?** Out of fear, they succumbed to peer pressure. Fear of being wrong. Fear of not being accepted!

So, how do we overcome this fear? In **2 Timothy 1:7**, the Apostle Paul reminds us that, "[For] God did not give us a spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control."

Our fears won't always vanish instantly, but we can face our fears with God in control. The Holy Spirit's empowerment will give us the ability to do what life demands, love when others hate, and maintain control when our fears arise. *Max Lucado* wrote, "Fear doesn't want you to make the journey to the mountain. If he can rattle you enough, fear will persuade you to take your eyes off the peaks and settle for a dull existence in the flatlands."

Now that you know how to handle your fears, let's consider another area that can cause us to take our eyes off of our dreams, that is, the memory of past failures; and again, we draw our insight from Paul, who encourages us to...

II. The second key cut is to: Forget your failures and be persistent!

No one likes to fail or even remember their failures. Unfortunately, many people constantly dwell on their failures. One might even be overheard saying, "Oh, I don't want to do that because I tried it before and failed." Graduates, I want to let you in on a little secret. Everyone will fail at one point in their life, but let me let you in on another secret. Failures are not the end of the world, but rather they are the beginning of success. Learn from them, and then go on!

What does this mean for our lives? Listen to what Paul wrote in *Philippians 3*. Paul was in prison, chained to a Roman guard, under what were probably deplorable conditions when he wrote, "Forget what is behind you and press forward." ***Philippians 3:13-14***

Paul believed 2 things:

1. He refused to allow failures to destroy his life, which is a good thing because Paul made many mistakes, including persecuting Christians.
2. He refused to allow his failures to keep him from his goal. In other words, he wasn't going to let his failures control or define him.

So, it's not a matter of "if" you fail, but "when." And when we fail, we must learn from it and then put it behind us. We must never allow failure to make us quit trying. Learn from them, but don't focus on them!

There is a neat story from "Sunshine Magazine" which goes like this. He was only twenty-three years old when a Gloucester youth saw this advertisement in a Boston newspaper: "Wanted, young man as an understudy to a financial statistician. P.O. Box 1720." He answered the advertisement...but received no reply. He wrote again—no reply. A third

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time—no reply. Then he went to the Boston post office and asked the name of the holder of Box 1720. The clerk refused to give it. He saw the postmaster. He, too, refused; it was against the rules. Early one morning, an idea came to the young man. He rose early, hurriedly ...went to the post office, and stood sentinel [watch] near Box 1720. After a long interval, a man appeared, opened Box 1720, and took out the mail. The young man trailed him to his destination, which was the office of a stock brokerage firm. The young man entered and asked for the manager. The youth told the manager how he had applied for the understudy position to a statistician—that he had written three times without receiving any response and had been refused the box holder's name at the post office. "But," queried the manager, "How did you find out that I was the advertiser?" "I stood in the lobby of the post office for several hours, watching Box 1720," answered the young man. "When a man came in and took the mail from the box, I followed him here." The manager said, "Young man, you are just the kind of persistent fellow I want. You are employed!"—Sunshine Magazine. So: Be persistent and don't give up!

III. This brings us to the final cut in our key for this morning, and that is: "Follow your faith and help others." (*Hebrews 12:1-3*)

In the original Olympic games in ancient Greece, the greatest event was a race up and down mountains. Speed wasn't the most crucial issue because the runner ran the race with a flaming torch. The winner was not necessarily the first person to reach the finish line. It was the person who crossed the line with the flame still burning. The moral of this story: We need to run the race so that we don't put out the flame. We might be later in crossing the line, not only because we are protecting our own flame but also because we are lighting the torches of others whose flames have gone out. Winning, as someone has said, is about finishing well, not just finishing first.

The Apostle Paul tells us if we want to finish our mission in life successfully, "... let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Let's throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, 2 and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter." (CEB)

So there you have it:

1. Face your fears, and don't let them control you and stop you from your dreams!
2. Forget your failures, learn from them, but don't let them paralyze you into inaction!
3. And...Get rid of anything that might trip you up and follow your faith!

In a moment, I'm going to give you one of these blank keys on a chain; let it be a symbol to remind you of the journey that still lies ahead in your life. Wear it around your neck, hang it from your rear-view mirror, or some other place where you will see it as a daily reminder of how you are shaping your life to open the new doors of opportunity that lie ahead. As each of you makes decisions, takes specific paths in life, and follows God, this will begin to etch a new pattern in your life. The same way that a key is to be carved and created to be of use, you will also shape your life to be all that God has created for you to be. I guarantee that as long as you keep God at the forefront of all that you do, you will not only be blessed, but you will be a blessing to God and to the others you meet.

I will close and leave each of you with a prayer from the *Book of Numbers*:

24 "May the Lord bless you and protect you.
25 May the Lord smile on you
and be gracious to you.
26 May the Lord show you his favor
and give you his peace.'
(Numbers 6:24-26)

My brothers and sisters, let us all remember that we have been blessed to be a blessing. So be one!

Pastor Gary

Pentecost - 2021

Acts 2:1-21 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" ⁸ And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." ¹² So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another "Whatever could this mean?" ¹³ Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." ¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. ¹⁵ For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
And they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in heaven above
And signs in the earth beneath:
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

²¹ And it shall come to pass
That whoever calls on the name of the Lord
Shall be saved.'

Space Exploration has captured the hearts and minds of many lad and lass down through the decades. I remember gleefully watching old black and white reruns of Buck Rogers (1928), Flash Gordon (1936), (both starring Larry Buster Crabbe, and one of my early rerun favorites, Commando Cody, "Sky Marshal of the Universe," aka, George Wallace! Honorable mention, of course, must go to *The Jetsons*!

Therefore, I clearly remember the excitement I felt as a little kid when I saw the historic rocket U.S. rocket launch. Perhaps you remember when John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth on February 20, 1962. It was a triple orbit journey that took 4-hours, 55 minutes, and 23 seconds before splashing down in the Atlantic Ocean. It became a catchphrase in my school for years to come to use the countdown of 5...4...3...2...1, blastoff for anything that had a definite beginning!

It was always a thrilling moment to see rocket and space shuttle launches on television, except for those times when something went wrong. There have been some terrible mishaps along the years with the loss of life, but twenty-three years ago to the day, there was an accident that bears mentioning. On June 4, 1994, a cluster of four spacecraft was launched on the maiden flight of a rocket called Ariane 5. Unfortunately, the rocket flew off 90-degrees off course just 37 seconds after launch. Disintegration began, and then its flight termination system caused it to self-destruct. The

Pentecost - 2021

four spacecraft were lost, but luckily no people were aboard when it self-destructed.

The problem? An error in the software design caused it to become one of the most expensive software bugs in history, resulting in a loss of more than \$370 million. Since that time, the Ariane 5 has become one of the most reliable rockets, with more than 90 flights.

Some 2,000 years ago, the remaining disciples and other men and women waited and prayed in the Upper Room since Jesus' ascension some ten days prior. Little did they know it, but a countdown had begun in heaven! This countdown would transform them all into Holy Spirit empowered believers who would turn the world upside down with their preaching, teaching, and very lives. Luke tells us that they gathered together when suddenly a howling wind filled the entire house where they were waiting. They then saw what looked like individual flames of fire alighting on each of them. With these two manifestations of God's presence, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability. I guess you could call this a successful liftoff for the disciples! With this empowerment, they began to speak so that the international group of Jewish worshippers gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost heard them speaking in their native languages! Many were amazed, but others scoffed, assuming that they had been "*filled with new wine*." Now empowered and emboldened by the Holy Spirit, Peter began to preach a powerful sermon proclaiming that the ancient prophecies had come to pass. With that, the church was born. It was a new era where anyone, Jew or Gentile, who wanted to "*call upon the Name of the Lord would be saved!*"

Despite the scoffers and naysayers who wanted to see this launch of the church self-destruct, it achieved an orbit that continues to this day! But thankfully, not every launch is successful! On August 29, 2017, North Korea experienced a failure to launch, but did you know that there is something called "*Failure to Launch Syndrome*" No rockets are needed! This one has to do with the occasional son or daughter who cannot, or will not, leave home. I'll let you look into this one, but suffice it to say that the Christian church also faces its own "*Failure to Launch Syndrome*."

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit empowered those present at Pentecost. It enabled them to be witnesses in word and deed. That same Holy Spirit is here for us today, and we have the fullness of the Spirit in our lives.

So if we've got the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, why aren't we occasionally failing to launch?

I think there are a few areas in which we can ensure a better "launch" for our collective ministries together:

Properly Fueled - Scripture tells us that they were all in one place before they were empowered by the Holy Spirit and having one mind and heart seeking God's presence. You and I have been given the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I wonder if we have been of such a mind and heart to allow the fullness of the Spirit to flow through us, as God intended. Perhaps if we come to God and hold little to nothing back, we can also experience an even greater transformation of our lives. There's an expression I heard many years ago when it came to church. It went something along these lines. If you want to hear God speak in your times of prayer, Bible study, or church worship, then prepare yourself through prayer and meditation before those events ever begin. Remember, before that historic preaching event on the day of Pentecost, they were in prayer for 10-days prior! I'm not saying that before you ever get something out of church or Bible study, it will take 10-days. Still, I am saying that something extraordinary might begin to happen when we take some time to pray and seek God's will and purpose for our lives.

Properly Programmed – In terms of the aforementioned fatal software bug in Ariane 5, we, too, need to ensure that we are putting some good programming into our lives. We program ourselves day in and day out by the things we think, say, do, watch, and fill our lives. What are you programming yourself with? The media's negativity? (2) The positivity of God's promises and discipleship? **Proverb 23:7** "*For as a person thinks in his or her heart, so is he or she.*"

(1) Putting our lives into Orbit - Okay, we're properly fueled by prayer and programmed by our study and preparation. Now what? We can embark on a mission of sharing the Good News with the people around us.

THE MAGNOLIA
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FAMILY WORSHIP 9:00 A.M.
ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:35 A.M.
GENESIS SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:35 A.M.
SANCTUARY WORSHIP 10:45 A.M.

Lectionary Texts for this Week
May 30, 2021

Trinity Sunday!

Lectionary Texts:

Isaiah 6:1-8

Psalm 29

Romans 8:12-17

John 3:1-17

Liturgical Color: White or Gold

White symbolizes purity, holiness, and virtue, as well as respect and reverence. White is used for all high Holy Days and festival days of **the Church Year**, especially the seasons of **Christmas** and **Easter**, as well as for baptism, marriage, dedications, and in some traditions for the ordination of ministers. In some church traditions it is also used for funerals as a symbol of the resurrection.

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Pentecost - 2021

In Jerusalem, Peter stood up and promised that *"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (*verse 21*).

The chances are slim that God will call us to witness in the same way that Peter was called to do, but He has called us to be a witness by the words we speak, the lives that we live, and the Gospel that we share! We can love one another enough to listen to each other, laugh with one another, cry with one another, and pray with one another in our times of need. We can even offer words of hope and peace in a world filled with bigotry and hatred. And we can even do all of those things with our families, friends, acquaintances, and strangers.

Sharing the Gospel and making disciples of all nations is not only a privilege, but it is a divine command!

You have been blessed to be a blessing, so be one!

Pastor Gary

