

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be reflections of your word to us today, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Well, I've had an interesting morning. Last night our water pump broke, so we went to bed without water and woke up with the same reality. Thank God we live in community! It's a beautiful concept, caring for each according to their need until you're the one in need and then it makes all the difference. Not many Christian communities carry a common purse anymore for the basic needs of living – we all give what we can to the common good and serve the needs of the church community and surrounding community out of our collective and personal resources. This is particularly true on Gabriola – we care about the well being of the whole, and so we serve each other according to the need and our ability to help. I'm grateful this morning that we live in community, that there was someone who could bring us water at 7:15 in the morning with a smile. In the midst of it all, I forgot that we're in a pandemic and I still need to think about social distancing. When I remembered I felt even more vulnerable – a lot of things are more challenging right now and thank God the help was there to meet

our need. There was a lot of suffering in first-century Israel/Palestine – a lot of people with nowhere to turn. I'm struck this morning at the enormous gift described in Acts 2. Not only were people able to get their needs met, they were able to move up Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The newly baptized entered into a community with a shape that is still considered the 'four marks of the church': the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking bread (Eucharist) and prayers. Not only are people cared for, they have a purpose other than survival, they are valued and have something to contribute to the community. Acts 2 offers a simple, stripped-down rhythm of Christian life, but it did not lack depth or meaning.

As you look at these four marks of the church, do you recognize them in the pre-pandemic life of our own Christian community? Every community lives into Christian life differently ...

But now we are living in strange times. Our lives are also stripped down. We've seen an upswing in caring for those according to their need, significant challenges when it comes to fellowship and Eucharist ... but honestly, pandemics have come and gone over the years for Christian

communities without the benefits of zoom or telephones, so I think we're pretty lucky. Communal prayer and consideration of the scriptures is still taking place. As you look at the balance of fellowship, Eucharist, studying scripture and prayer in your own life, have your needs changed since the pandemic started? Maslow's hierarchy of needs tells me we haven't necessarily thought about it. I have only recently started to see reflections on how the pandemic is shaping us. Reflection takes time . . . so perhaps these are seeds. During this time that is set apart from other time, it might just be a little easier to cut to the chase, to be really honest with ourselves. What of these are you longing for? Has your perspective on the role of any of these in your life changed in new circumstances? What do you need more of? Is there something blocking you with one of these? Or do you need help getting started? Or are you ready to go to the next level and don't know how? This is the basic shape of discipleship: reflecting on and shaping our lives with Jesus' teachings and the scriptures, supporting each other in our living and learning, connecting with God through prayer and celebrating our oneness and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. We have a

unique perspective right now – perhaps even there are truths emerging for us during this time that we might not have learned otherwise. Thanks be to God!