

Sermon Outline - Sun, January 8, 2023 – Vision - In Search of a New Hearth
Isaiah 65:17-22; Revelation 21:1-6

Overview of Month – Every January we focus on the topic of Vision. We have been leaning into Revelation 21:1-6. (1) God is with us. (2) God is sensitive to our needs and traumas. (3) Imagine us living the Kin(g)dom of God on Earth

Exegesis

- Revelations is one of the least understood and theologically manipulated books
- Apocalyptic scripture = can be scary ; particularly for those of us who grew up in the Left Behind era when we were all afraid of an impending tribulation
- Central idea of the apocalypse is that for new things to be born, some things have to pass away
- Some of us gravitate to destruction and others to creation but God’s vision emerges in the space between.
- Heaven and earth – challenges us to think about the possibilities of heaven but to see that our mission is to make the heavenly vision a reality on earth as much as possible.
- Heaven + Earth = Hearth
- Analogy of the hearth – the container where the fire can destroy and create warmth and new possibilities can emerge in a safe and protected way
- I equate it with time in front of the woodstove, but the use of the hearth in metal work is more apt. It is clearer to see that only in the fire can the hard metal be purified and transformed

Key Points –

1. Vision is about what we embrace – We have to be open to possibilities AND
2. Vision is also about what we let go of- If we can’t release some things then there is not space for us to grab on to other things
3. The vision comes to pass in the tension between creation and destruction → re-birth; emergence – So even as we are focusing on transformative possibilities we cannot lose sight of the fact that something also has to be released

As we are in a time where things are crumbling around us, we have the opportunity to see the way in which that is part of God’s plan. We can focus less on what is lost and recognize that they shedding creates new possibilities. As we vision about who we are called to be as a congregation, we must ask what needs to be released in order for something new to emerge.

Hearth Exercises -

1. If you imagine this time as a space at the hearth. What are you called to throw into the fire? What do you imagine to emerge from the fire?
2. In what ways do you create space for hearth tending throughout the year? How can you sustain a practice of fire tending in your life?
3. Think back to a time in your life where letting go of something (maybe that you didn’t want to or mean to) created space for something new and better to emerge.