

## **“Holy Heartbeat”**

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**St. Luke’s Episcopal Church – Anchorage, Kentucky**

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A woman I used to work for used to ask for volunteers to lead a prayer at the beginning and end of our meetings. Every time she asked, she made a point not to look at anyone in particular, it wasn’t meant to be a high pressure situation, merely an offer. Some of my coworkers occasionally volunteered, others kept their heads bowed and their mouths shut every time. For me, the moments between her asking and someone beginning to pray were torturous. As soon as we sat down together, I would begin to feel anxious, and my heart would feel like it was trying to escape my chest. I felt a need, a pull to speak up and pray for us, but I was trapped by a crippling fear of making a mistake. Although these were people I had known and worked with for a long time, some of them all my life, there was something about becoming vulnerable in the way that only prayer makes us that terrified me.

Then one day, our leader asked “would anyone like to pray?” and no one answered her. All those who felt most comfortable had already spoken up, and those who were not inclined had pretty much established that they never would. The silence and the waiting were too much to bear. Right as I was attempting to calm my breathing so that I could shakily step forward, our leader spoke again. She said, gently, “If your heart is racing, that is the spirit calling you to this.” I felt like all the air had been pulled from my lungs. Was she right? Was she reading my mind? Is this feeling that I’m calling anxiety, some kind of divine inspiration? I don’t think I believed her at first. But when I opened my mouth and said “The Lord be with you,” the racing stopped. My

voice still shook, I tripped over a syllable or two, but for the first time during those sessions, my heart was quiet. I wasn't anxious, I no longer felt trapped. The call had been answered.

My heart would continue to race every time anyone asked for a volunteer to pray, to lead worship, or to preach. I learned that the only way to slow it down is to give in to the calling, to step up, and to speak out.

When I saw the gospel reading for today, my heart didn't race, in fact I believe it may have stopped for a moment. How am I going to preach on so short a message? I have a literature degree, I need more words! But, since today is Trinity Sunday, I realized I really only needed 3 words. Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. These three words sum up for us the role our triune God plays in our lives and in our history. We were created as stewards of all creation. We were redeemed along with all the world by the sacrifice made in Jesus Christ. We are sustained by the spirit who pours love into our hearts. I can't think of any other aspect of our Christian faith that is both so simple and so complex. Christians have spent hundreds of years discussing the topic of the Trinity, debating it, studying it, dividing or uniting ourselves around it. What does one God in three persons look like? How do the persons of the Trinity relate to one another, and what does that mean for us? The Holy Spirit, which both comes from God and IS God, is what brings us to ask these questions. God the spirit makes our hearts race when we are called to a new ministry, or warned against straying from the path. She sustains us through life's challenges, whether they be personal or global, medical or social. The Holy Spirit that rested on the apostles at Pentecost and gifted them with the universal language of Love is the same Holy Spirit that binds us to one another in Christ, inextricably linked to one another in a dim reflection of the brilliant union of the Holy Trinity.

Our creator, our God who out of chaos and deep darkness created everything that is, did not cease to create when the work of the heavens and the earth were done. The creativity and infinite possibility of God is not relegated to a distant past or a seven day story. The creativity of our God continues every moment, in a world that is still growing and changing and evolving, and in our hearts as we grow and change and learn more deeply how to be God's chosen people. God's continued creation flows through us as we create music, poetry, art, as we discover the cosmos and the infinite possibilities of our environment, as we tend to the earth and to one another. God the Creator works in us and through us as we raise up our children in the path of righteousness and truth, and works in our communities as we come together to protect the least and the lost in our midst. In this time of pandemic, divinely inspired creativity knows no limits as we find ways to worship together from afar, as we work to feed one another and protect one another and find ways to show up for one another in times of joy and grief. Our creation continues.

Our redeemer, God who was born so that we might be reborn, who died so that we might live eternally, has promised to be with us always. God our redeemer preaches to us just as he preached to the thousands who followed him up the mountain and across the desert. God our redeemer teaches us the same lessons of love and service that he taught to his brothers and sisters, to strangers and friends, tax collectors and soldiers. God who redeems us continues to perform miracles in our lives just as he healed and fed our ancestors when they were sick and hungry and calling on his holy name. God who redeems us, who was born of a human mother and given the name of Jesus, accomplished the redemption of the world on the cross and continues to redeem us as we call on him for forgiveness, courage, and renewal. The redeeming

work of God is our birthright and our Christian duty, the core of our call as disciples of Jesus, as apostles and evangelists of the living God.

In all our work, in moments when our hearts race and in moments when they break, we are sustained by God our Advocate, whose spirit enables our flawed humanity to accomplish impossible things. God who creates us, God who redeems us, God who sustains us, one God whose three persons are tied together in a constant motion of mutuality, is the divine community for which we all long in the depths of our souls. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, one God. A perfect unity of coeternal love, a relationship of coequality and unbreakable communion. That is what we honor today, and profess week by week, as we strive to live lives guided entirely by the same undivided and indivisible love. Listen to your heartbeat. You are being called. How will you answer?