

Ordinary Time

(Scripture reading opportunity: Acts 1:1-11 and Acts Chapter 2)

Summertime in the church year can seem kind of quiet. The Big Days are all in the cool weather (at least in Northern New England): Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Things seem to go a little quiet when the days get long and the weather turns warm.

Some denominations deliberately order their church year with a set liturgical calendar; a rhythm that begins at the advent (so to speak) of Advent, and climaxes with Easter and the Pentecost Season. But the “church year” doesn’t *end* with Pentecost. After Pentecost (50 days after Easter), the church enters the “weeks after Pentecost”, also known as “Ordinary Time”. For example, Sunday July 23rd is the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost. There will be *Twenty-Five* Sundays after Pentecost before Advent comes around again on December 3rd of this year! In churches that color code their “paraments” (the colored cloth drapes that may be found on the altar, lectern, and/or pulpit) to seasons of the church year, Ordinary Time is represented by Green. Green, green, green. Week after week after week, all summer. It gets kind of predictable. Ordinary. Ho-hum. Lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer (I’m showing my age with that reference!).

Well, think about *green*. Green is the color representing Ordinary Time for a reason. Green represents *growth*, and growth represents *change*. To paraphrase Woody Allen (*albeit* with dubious theological support), our Christian walk is like a shark: if it doesn’t keep moving forward, it dies. Ordinary time may be ordinary, but it’s not *static*.

Remember the *first* Pentecost. Some pretty disoriented Apostles, still reeling from confusion of the death, resurrection, and then the ascension of their Lord, grew quite a bit on that day (as recorded in Acts 2). At Pentecost, nearly two millennia ago, God forever changed the way He interacts with His people. He gave us a new way to “be the church”, and He wanted us to plant *and* to grow. Jesus called his Disciples to be Fishers of Men (people), and we all still have that opportunity. The church is (still) growing. *Our* church congregation is *growing*. Maybe just baby steps, but we’re trying new things, or re-invigorating old things. An evening of band music on the green; a summer Bible Camp. We look for new ways to be not just relevant, but also *useful*, to the congregation and to our neighbors as well.

We also all have the opportunity to grow *ourselves*, within the church and “out on the street” – through our acts, through our studies and through our prayer lives. Thanks to the gifts that God gave us at Easter and Pentecost, there’s nothing ordinary about Ordinary time. May the long, warm days of summer bring growth and change to our church and to all of us, to His honor and glory!

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July 2017