

# RENEWING OUR LIFE IN GOD'S LOVE FOR THE WORLD

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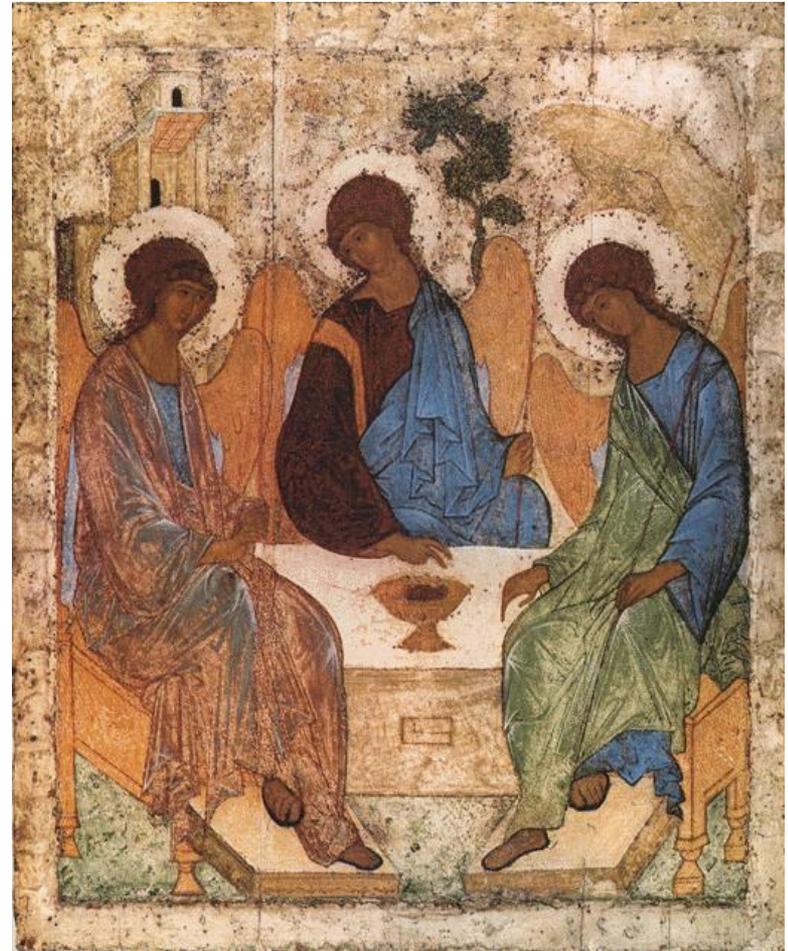
Dwight Zscheile

# Dwelling in the World

- Think back to a time during the past week when you had an opportunity to share the peace.
- What might God have been doing there?  
What might God like to do?

# God's Ecstatic Communal Life

- Trinity—God 'circulating around the neighborhood' (*perichoresis*)
- Mutuality
- Reciprocity
- Shared life and personhood
- Difference without division
- Unity without uniformity



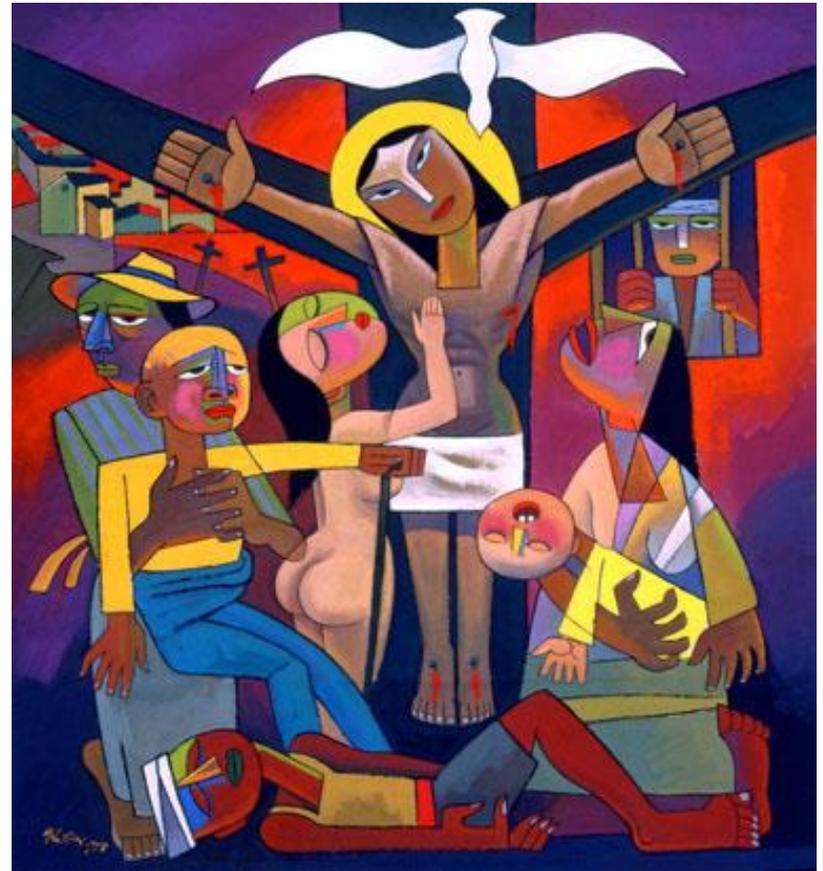
# Creation and Calling

- Created in image of divine community
- Fall: breaking pattern of right relationship with God, one another, earth
- A called people
  - Abraham and Sarah
  - Israel
- For the sake of the whole world
- Through particular for universal



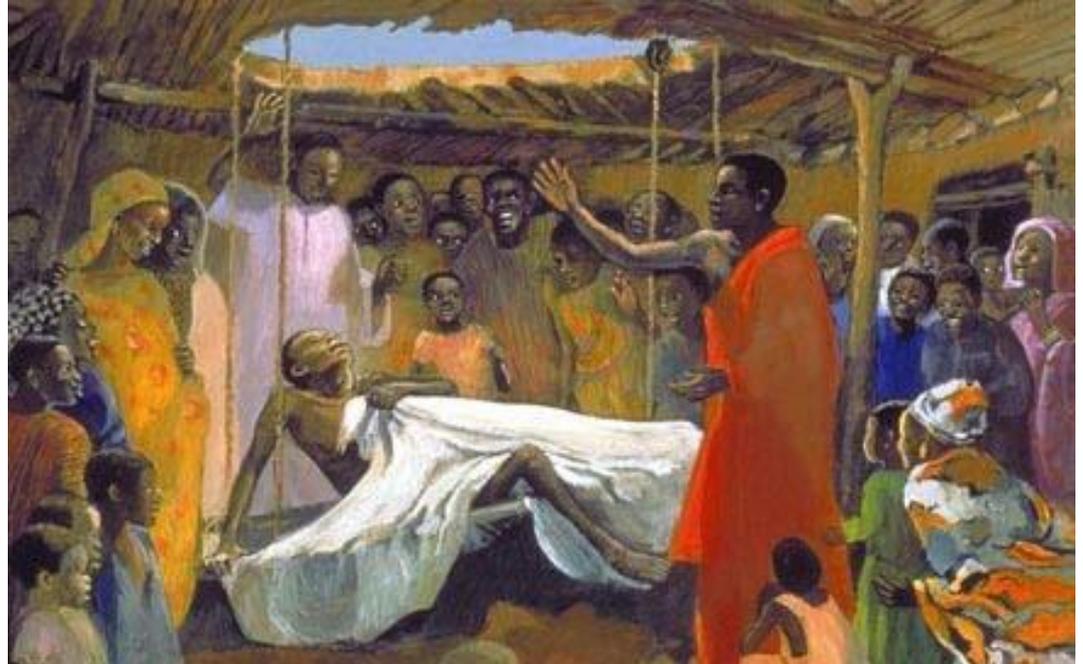
# Jesus: God Moves into Neighborhood

- God participates fully in human life to restore us to participation in God's communal life
- Word made flesh
- Relying upon hospitality of others
- Reciprocity
- Dying outside gates
- Sharing our place



# God's Reign of Mercy and Justice

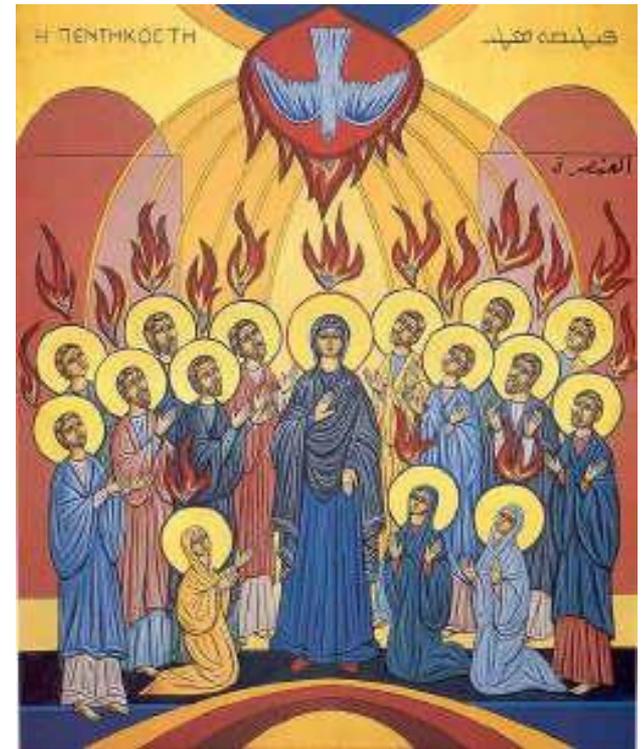
- Already/not yet
- Healing, mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice
- Surprising, hidden, inverts world's orderings
- Our role
  - Not building, but 'entering, inheriting, receiving'
  - Witnessing
  - Initiating



# God's Mission Has a Church

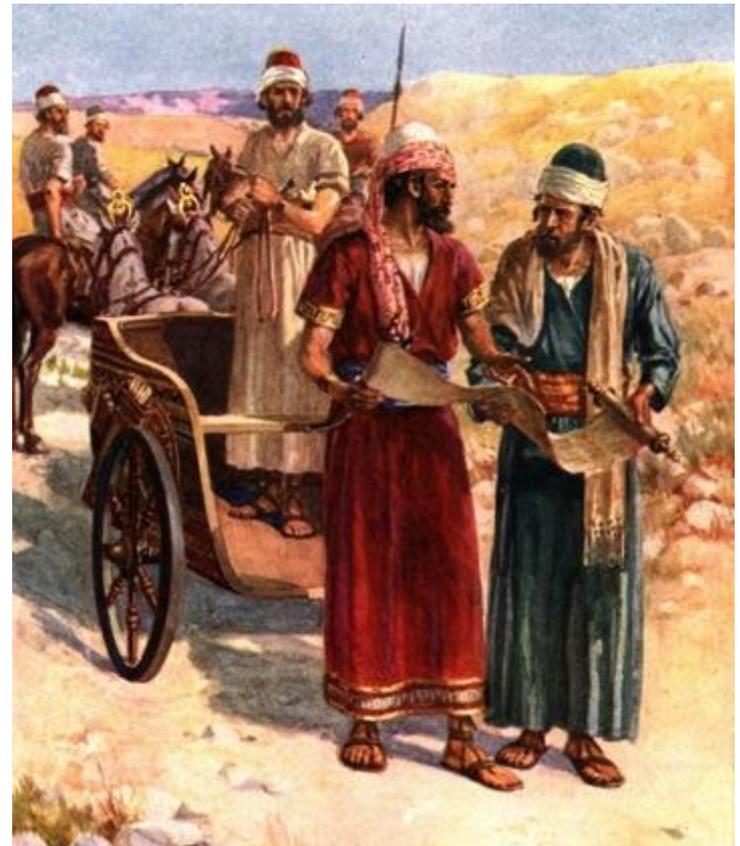
- Community of Jesus and Spirit
- God is a missionary God
- Our identity lies in our participation in God's missional life
- “It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church, creating a church along the way.”

—Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*



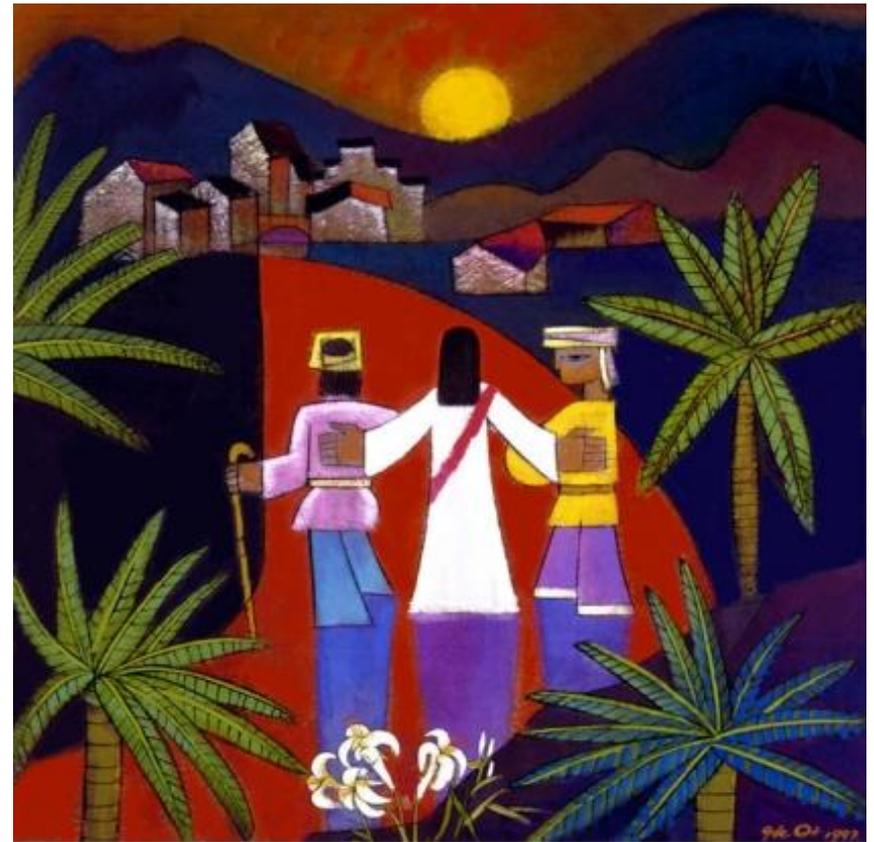
# Participating in God's Mission

- From doing mission on God's behalf to *participating* in triune God's movement in world
- God's dynamic agency, presence, initiative
- Public Spirit: forming and reforming community



# From Benevolence to Companionship

- Christian mission involves forming community
- Accompanying (“bread with”)
- Turning strangers into friends



# God's Demonstration Plot

- Local church is where world looks to see, interpret the Gospel of Jesus
- Living demonstration of reconciled, restored community (in all its imperfections)



# How the Early Church Grew

- Through ordinary people in daily spheres of influence
- Social networks
- “Gossiping the Gospel”
- Living as community of compassion



# Living as People of the Way

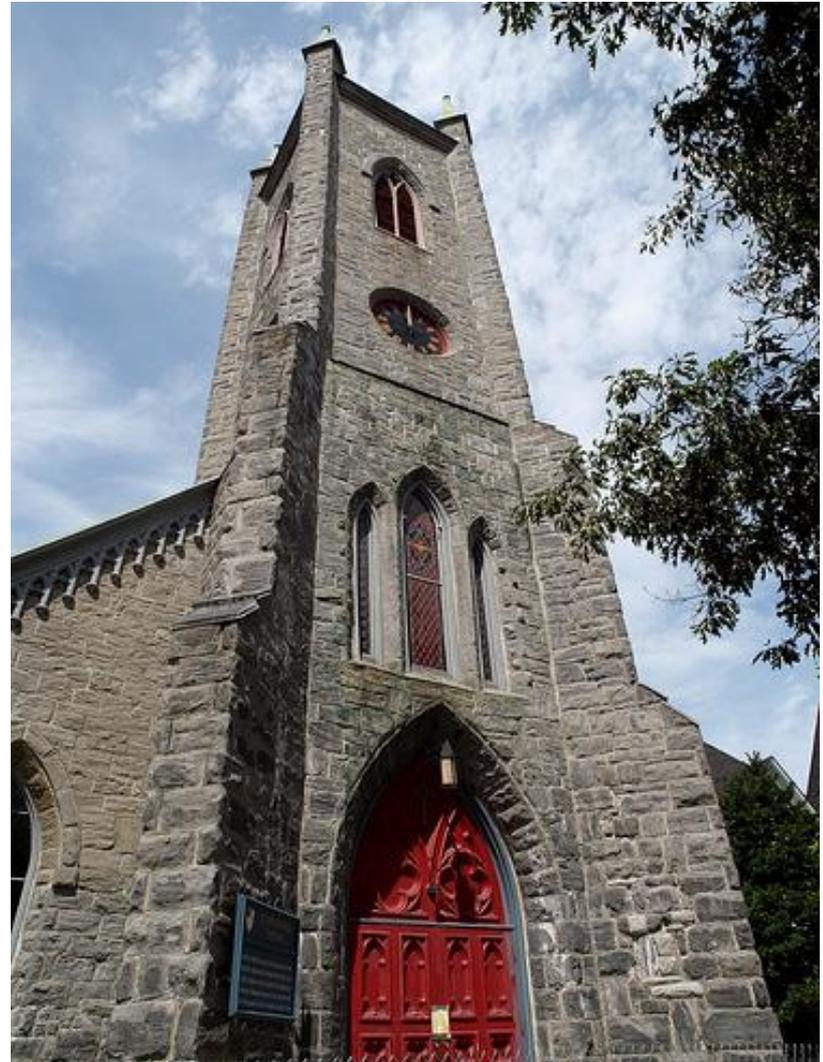
“Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the **hope** that is within you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”

—1 Peter 3:15-16



# St. James Episcopal Church, Great Barrington, MA

- Founded 1762 by SPG missionaries
- First full-time rector baptized over 2,000 people
- 1850s building
- Church of establishment
- Long, slow decline



# Fall of the Wall (July 31, 2008)



# Relying Upon Hospitality of World



- What is essential to being church together?



# Gideon's Garden



# Questions for Discussion

- Share a story of a time when you received or depended upon the hospitality of strangers. What did it feel like? What happened there?
- What opportunities to form community with neighbors exist in your church's current ministries? Where might further opportunities lie?