

## From the Pastor: Sacred conversation ...



In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, artists created countless works focusing on the Christ story. As we look back at these works, we are staggered by the breadth and depth of the early church's commitment to artistic expression.

One large grouping of works focuses on Jesus and Mary in the center of a painting or fresco, with individuals gathered around them who depict saints, biblical characters, or donors. Often paintings were intended for use above altars or were converted to stained glass. The paintings express a wide variety of emotions.

In many of these instances, the setting is that of a church or monastic cloister. In the latter part of the fifteenth century, the characters move from a more serious and meditative placement to being engaged in laughter and emotion, in activity and expression. Musicians and teachers, poets and clergy are often included in these later depictions. Settings for the art works range from homes and sitting rooms to classrooms and halls. Though each work is different, they usually share a common title, "sacra conversazione" -- the sacred conversation.

During the season following Pentecost, the church recounts the important conversations that occur as the church develops into a beloved community. As it moves from a loose band of followers to a recognized gathering of Christians, biblical conversations between Jesus and those he meets deepens. The church needs to retell these stories, and add their own, for its life to be enriched. The practice of a sacred conversation invites God and our own human story in a partnership which allows for growth in our relationships.

Whenever two or three gather, this sacred conversation to occurs among the faithful. Gathering, worship, liturgy, fellowship, food, encourages sacred conversation. Sacred conversation with God leads to sacred conversation continued with each other.

We are supported and encouraged for the journey by each other. We are a gift of grace one to another. God reaches us in unassuming and personal ways through others. As we begin new routines this "Fall," I encourage you to make time to meet someone new. Stay for hospitality after worship, sit with someone "new" and say: "I don't know you very well, can we sit together." "Tell me something I may not know about you." "What's your first memory of God's presence?" (Okay, this might be a bit more advanced, but move toward it.) Use your imagination, open yourself up to the sacred. Or, use one of the conversation cards on the Fellowship tables to open a discussion. Call it homework for the season. I suspect you will be blessed! Blessings and Joy!! *Pastor Karen*