

*15* "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. *16* And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. *17* This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

*18* "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. *19* In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. *20* On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. *21* They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

This time of year as I head home after an evening meeting I tune my car radio to 1100 to see how the Indians game is going. After I cross the railroad tracks on Highway 83 into Avon there is an area there where the voice of Tom Hamilton almost disappears amidst the sound of static. Interference – lots of electronic interference goes on there – I have no idea what the cause is. But on that short stretch of road there the air must be filled with electrical waves – always. But when the radio is off or tuned to an FM station I have no idea of the waves that are there. Sometimes I wonder about those waves – they must be going into me – through me – are they having any effect?

Jesus was with his disciples. In an hour or so they would be going out the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas would come there with soldiers. A kiss would be the signal – Judas would kiss Jesus to set into motion everything that Jesus had come to do. Arrest, trial, mocking, crucifixion, death, burial, all of these would follow that kiss one after the other. Through Jesus' dying heaven would be opened to sinners – a place would be prepared in the dwelling of God for you who believe in Jesus. On this night of his betrayal Jesus wanted to assure his disciples – prepare them for what was to come. He told them, "I go to prepare a place for you and when I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

If there is one belief that most everyone in the church shares it is that Jesus died for the forgiveness of our sins and that through him we have eternal life. But what about the in-between time? Jesus was going from his disciples to prepare a place, he would come again and take them to the Father's house, but what about the in-between time?

That night before the kiss of Judas Jesus told his disciples this: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the

Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you and will be in you.

An advocate, the Spirit of truth, for those who do not belong to Jesus as unseen and unknown as that electrical field down the highway when I do not have my radio on. But for those who keep Jesus commandments this Spirit of truth will be in them and with them.

The Spirit of truth is in you and with you who believe - all the time alive in you, working to help you – an advocate – on your side stirring up faith in you and enabling you to keep Jesus commandment to love one another.

Sometimes in this life things come at us that seem to smother the spirit in us - betrayal by one to whom we have been faithful - jobs and investments and people we have counted on – lost. Shame – our sin public for everyone to know and to talk about. Failure.

It must have been like that for the disciples – not just that day when Jesus died but so many times after that. Stephen stoned to death, conflict between Christians, Annanias and Saphira promising to give everything to the church in Jerusalem but secretly holding part back. Persecution and slaughter of Christians under the Roman emperor Nero. The Roman army coming and destroying the Holy city, Jerusalem – scattering the believers.

Jesus promised that the Spirit of truth would be with them – in them – always present, always an advocate even when their own spirit was crushed.

You and I have witnessed this – some of us have experienced it – God raising us up when hope is gone. Just like Easter – a new beginning.

Martin Luther said that God can be at work anywhere but that we should seek the Spirit where God has promised to be. That is why we gather to hear God's word, and to share the sacrament for God has promised to strengthen faith and hope and love through the word – through the body and blood of Christ. Next week the Senior Choir will sing, "God Is Here." Now that is not true if we are thinking of this as a place but in the gathering of God's people around word and sacrament God is here, in us and among us through the Holy Spirit.

To hear that static on my radio as I drive down highway 83 I need to have my radio tuned to an AM station. As we gather here faith is what enables us to know that the Spirit is in us. Jesus says the Spirit is with us and in us and as you believe you will know it is so. Though the Spirit given to you in baptism is in you and with you even if you do not believe, in your believing you know the Spirit is present.

Thanks be to God.