

Sometime in the mid 1960's, when it was popular to claim that God is dead, cartoonist Walt Kelly was creating the "Pogo" comic strip. In one cartoon, Pogo, a possum in the swamp, is showing the design for the animals' Christmas card which states: "God is not dead, He is merely unemployed." In the sixth chapter of the Book of John, Jesus reassures His disciples before His crucifixion that although He is leaving them, the Father would send an advocate and counselor to be with them always, as a reminder of His teaching and a guide to take them forward. This week, we will remember Jesus' Ascension to heaven and on June 9, Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit to each disciple. The Holy Spirit was given to the disciples and then to the "nations".

Faith is available to all, but it is not automatic. Having faith involves some combination of receiving and seeking, listening and learning. Help is there, in good times and, especially, in bad times. We have to "employ God", to interact with the Spirit by attending, asking, listening, silence. We also find the Spirit in our interactions with others. Faith is not solitary, or at least not only solitary. Faith grows in community. Jesus tells His followers, then and now, to love one another, even when this is hard to do.

The guidance of the Spirit may come in the form of an idea, a word from another, a sense of peace. Scripture, prayer, worship, study, conversation and fellowship are sources. The counselor and advocate is with us and sometimes without being asked for help. But how much better if we ask. Favorite prayers for me are "Help" and "Show me" and "Be with me here". Don't leave God's love for us unemployed.

Rev. Virginia Yochem
St Stephen's Episcopal Church, Goliad
Church of the Ascension, Refugio