

10/20/2011

## The Rev. Joanne Fong

[joanefong@bmpc.org](mailto:joanefong@bmpc.org)

The dishwasher is seldom used in my house. Living alone, I accumulate only a dish or two at best by the end of the day. Basically I wash a lot of dishes by hand. I love Palmolive. On some rare occasions, when they do pile up, like after dinner parties, family dinners and late night meetings – I throw them in the dishwasher. This week was one of those rare occasions. When a friend gave me a gift box full of beautiful dinner dishes, dessert plates and tea-cups, I decided the dishwasher would be more expedient than my own hand washing them all. But, what happens?! It doesn't work. Hardly ever used in the torrid summer heat, and now with the cool, fall season approaching, the repairman guessed the motor "forgot" how to properly function. After a quick reminder, a gentle nudge, and a push from his Philips screwdriver, however, the motor spun to life, remembered her purpose and the dishwasher worked! Water poured out abundantly, leaving no marks of soap residue behind. All that remained was the unmistakable scent of clean, and of course, a huge pile of dishes. Little did I know all the dishwasher needed was a little bit of encouragement.

Like the motor in the dishwasher, when we neglect our spiritual formation, we eventually stop working the way God intended. The seasons change, our life gets busy, and challenges arise. Before we know it just like the motor out of commission from lack of use, we are out of commission from a lack of spiritual growth. We find ourselves lost, unable to put our hands on the tools that nurture our spiritual gifts. Over time our hearts grow hard – hot from anger, cold from complacency – neither serving the Lord, nor strangers in need of our friendship. Before we know it we find ourselves lacking faith. We stop practicing faith and separate ourselves from God's community. The good news, the Gospel, is that our lack is met by God's plenty. Our falling away may not be a good word, but it's not the last word.



Moses spent years in the desert after some tragic twists and turns in life that very well might have left him wondering: where was God in all of this? God was closer than he thought. After a long dry season in the desert, things began anew. He learned an important lesson, one that will be the theme of Kellen's sermon: vocation, being called by God, is about our whole selves. It's not just about what we do, but how we do it. The spirit began spinning the wheel of Moses's heart, and the rest is history. May it be so with us...

### Prayer

*O come, Holy Spirit; come as the fire and burn; come as the wind and cleanse; come as the light and reveal; come as the water and refresh. Convict, convert, and consecrate us, until we are wholly yours. Amen*