

Good morning,

I saw a friend a while back who I hadn't seen in quite a while. It was an absolute delight to see them. We were chatting and laughing. But in the back of my mind there was something, a thought. And I couldn't shake it. I didn't want to say it out loud, but I just couldn't hold it in. So in a moment of silence I seized the opportunity. I looked at them right in the eyes and said. So hey, I know we haven't seen each other in a while, but you're really starting to look older. And we chuckled and then my friend said back to me well I was thinking too and I really can see that you've been doing a lot of cooking for yourself, because you're looking a little rounder.

Its funny how life happens when we are not watching, I mean life is still happening when we are not watching. I think we are all feeling what I call the grandparent syndrome. Where, in our minds eye, the picture of a person that we have, is of the last time we saw them. And so when we see them again we see they look different, we want to pinch their cheeks and say my haven't you grown, how'd you get so big?

This morning I would like to talk about that, that space in between. The space in between the last time we saw each other and the next time we will see each other. What happens in this space? We don't know...maybe?

Paul in our reading from acts is talking to the Athenians, these Athenians live in a world not too much unlike our own. They are busy people, where there are millions of things that call for their attention. They live in a world of many gods, many idols claiming their allegiances. And Paul shows up and he is walking through their city, and he sees all of the many idols. And then he finds himself addressing a crowd, and he tells them, in what feels like the most graciously sarcastic way possible, that he can see that they are indeed very religious people. You must be, because you worship a million different things. But then he says that he did see something and it was curious, he said he saw an altar with an inscription that said, to an unknown God.

An unknown God Paul says, what you might think is unknown really isn't unknown at all. This unknown god is really the god who created the world and everything in it. He is actually saying you really know what you think is unknown. It's like Paul says, it is in God that we live and move and have our being. He's saying the proof is in the pudding.

Today is a very special day, it's been circled on my calendar since last July. Today is the day that we celebrate our confirmands. They successfully completed our 20-week class where we discussed the basics of our faith in Christ, the pillars of the church. I've gotten to know them and they are some truly bright, funny and really remarkable young people. I got to zoom with a

couple of them the other day, and I found myself suffering from what I mentioned earlier, the grandparent syndrome. I was so happy to see them. They looked so much older than the last time we had seen each other in person. And in one of our conversations, we reflected on a question that was asked to them at the beginning of our class back last September. Many of them answered the question differently now compared to back in september, and I was so taken back by their answers I asked why do you think your answer changed. Someone said duh ive grown, and learned some stuff.

I said you've grown and learned some stuff. Right on. Maybe that space in between isn't actually so much of a mystery. Its jammed packed full of growing and learning some stuff. Maybe its closer to what Paul said about the unknown god, its really not unknown. In God we live and move and have our being. Again the proof is in the pudding. Even though we are unable to be gathered here today to mark this occasion and to celebrate these young people, that does not mean what happened and what is happening in the space in between didn't take place. You cant stop it. Learning happened, growing happened and it is still happening.

So I want to encourage everyone who is watching the livestream right now to congratulate our confirmands in the comments section. And I would also like to thank

my co-instructors Pastor Liz and our youth minister Sarah.

But let me tell you lastly, there is something more that connects us all to each other and to God than the internet. Jesus tells us in our gospel from John 14 that he will ask the Father, and he will give us another advocate, to be with us forever. Jesus is talking about the Holy Spirit, the Advocate. Jesus says you know it, the Spirit abides with you, and will be in you.

The goal of confirmation, which is the beginning of the whole of the Christian life is to begin to see something that has always been there and will always be there. Like Paul and the unknown God. It's only unknown until you start to see it, you start to live and breathe it, you know and start to believe in it. And yeah the Christian life is a long journey filled with ups and downs, twists and turns. But know this, you are truly never alone. Even if you are stuck inside you are not alone. There are people who have gone before you in this Christian life and there will be people who come after you. And we are all bound together, in God, through Christ, with the Holy Spirit. Never forget that

Amen