

Prayer hearts (Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47)

Will we be a people who wait for the promises of God with open hearts?

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A prayer heart from Idlewild Presbyterian in Memphis

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How is God shaping your heart for ministry?

This picture of a prayer heart is from Tuesdays Together, an event at my church where we work on Christian formation in an intergenerational setting. We share a meal, sing and pray, and then come together around a mission project.

This particular Tuesday, we made "love soup": We poured dried beans and bouillon together into bags to share with our ministry partner in Cuba. In a different setting, at a women's retreat in Florida, we asked the women who gathered, "When you imagine God's love in Christ Jesus at work in your heart, what does it look like?" The women drew and colored a variety of hearts. No two were the same.

During Lent we asked God to "create in me a clean heart."

Now at the Ascension, will we be a people who wait for the promises of God with open hearts? Or will we stand still, gazing up toward heaven? How will we clap our hands and shout to God with loud songs of joy? How will we--how do we--pray that we might know the hope to which Christ has called us, a hope that does not disappoint? How do we pray that Christ might give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation as we come to know him?

We do all this with the gift of thanksgiving, the gift of gratitude.

At church we put out markers, paper, brushes, and paint. We asked anyone who stopped at this particular station, "How do you give thanks in prayer?"

A young girl named Isabelle responded by drawing a heart and writing these words of gratitude: "dere God thak you for the hevens and for food and water."

How do you give thanks in prayer?

Psalm 47 tells us that we can clap our hands, for God is king over all the earth and has chosen our heritage. In Acts 1 Jesus tells his disciples not to get lost in the details. They need to know that the power of the Holy Spirit will come upon them, and they will be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

How are you a witness to the ends of the earth?