

**February 5, 2023**  
**Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**  
**Union's Annual Meeting**

**Meditation:** "Born of Spirit"

I'm not really sure what Rev. Tom Beecroft talked about last week, other than that I know his sermon was titled 'You Are Blessed.' Perhaps he talked about the fact that we are blessed beyond our wildest imaginings, and we aren't even fully aware of it.

My own study took me down a different path. I explored wisdom, and how God's wisdom turns the wisdom of this world on its head. If you and I were homeless and living on the streets this past week, we might have thought that the colder the temperatures got at night the more likely it would be that we would want to be indoors for the night, but for the homeless, the colder it gets out at night, the more likely they want to stay outside because there are more people in the shelters, which means more danger there: more danger of getting TB or bedbugs or mugged in your sleep and losing your footwear or.... Add to that the worry that your place and your stuff won't be there when you return from the shelter. That's how God's wisdom works, contrary to what we might expect. Or, for an example from the Bible, it is not the powerful who will inherit the earth, but the meek. In the process of exploring God's wisdom and God's blessing I wondered if blessing is wisdom, for both are about relationship and wellbeing.

And then this week I read Paul's words to the church in Corinth about wisdom and the Spirit. "We speak God's wisdom," he says. God's wisdom is about how to live together in harmony, with God, with one another, and with God's creation. And that wisdom has been "revealed to us through the Spirit."

Do you remember back about a month ago, January 8<sup>th</sup>? It was a Sunday. In fact it was the Sunday that we baptized Sully Maunu. Anyway, do you remember all the people gathering around Sully and laying hands on him at a certain point? What was being signified by that action was the transmission of the Spirit of God, from those of us who had previously been baptized by water and the Spirit, to Sully. Sully was baptized by water, and in that moment, by the Spirit of God as well. John said that he baptized with water, but the one who was to come after him would baptize with the Spirit. All of us who have been baptized ever since, have been baptized not only with water, but with the Spirit. In biblical language, we have been born, not only of flesh, but of the Spirit of God as well.

And if we have been baptized with the Spirit, then the wisdom of God, a wisdom that defies the wisdom of this world, is readily available to each and every one of us. The wisdom of the world says, as pointed out by Randy Bachmann and BTO, "keep looking

out for number one.” But God’s wisdom seeks the benefit of someone other than “number one.” I know, it doesn’t make sense to those of us steeped in the wisdom of this world, but that’s how God’s wisdom works.

Today is our annual congregational meeting. It is a day to review how we have been living out God’s wisdom and blessing, as revealed to us by the Spirit, in Central Elgin and beyond.

I could go on at length, but the meeting awaits. Rather than spending more time discerning lessons in scripture, let us discern where God has been with us and how we have been living out God’s wisdom this past year.