

**Dear Friends,**

One of our regular attenders asked me about my message a couple weeks ago, what did Rev. Thistlewaite mean by, "We've met" when asked by an atheist how she can believe in an invisible God. I can't say for sure what her experience was, but I can reflect on my own and what I have heard in conversations and read in other books and articles. 'We've met' does sound very definitive in that she and God had a cup of coffee together, walked down the path amongst the trees, or she was caught up in a vision. I think we can broaden that out.

In a Pew study/poll, over 50% of Americans have claimed that they have had a spiritual experience. Some probably say that they were visited by a loved one who died, but I do imagine that many have experienced God/Jesus/Holy Spirit in a whisper, a touch, a moment of clarity.

Richard Rohr in one (or all) of his books, talks about how we are all mystics and can experience the presence of God. He starts with a story of a young woman who woke up just filled with pure love and every person she saw that morning she felt nothing but love for them. Jesus tells us as we do it to the least of these, we do it for him. We can experience Jesus in those who are sick, in prison, homeless, hungry, and poor.

I do imagine that many in our county have experienced a perfect moment of silence out on the lake or trail, or just have been overwhelmed by the beauty and grandeur of God's creation.

Just sitting with our partner, our children, and friends and being grateful for the time spent together can bring in the presence of God. It doesn't have to be skies opening and angels (though I have one Methodist pastor friend who was called to the ministry this way).

I have seen God in the church showing love in many generous ways. I have experienced the peace of God sitting under a tree. I have heard God in a song sung at my first wife's funeral. I have been guided by God in my prayers and in my journey of faith. I can seek God in the face of those around me and those who are far away.

Peace