

Sermon Notes: The Beyond in Our Midst

1. In 1944, the Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “God’s ‘beyond’ is not the beyond of our cognitive faculties [i.e., what we know]. God is the beyond in the midst of life.”
2. The prophet Jeremiah, long before Bonhoeffer, likewise claims that God resides here: “Yet you, O Lord, are in the midst of us.” No looking to heaven for God! According to 2 Timothy 4:17, Paul also experienced God’s presence close by as the source of strength that enabled him to face persecution.
3. What is it about these people that empowered them to persist in the face of hardship? The answer is faith—not a belief in God’s existence but the experience of being empowered by something deeper than oneself to press onward and persevere, convinced that God is present.
4. Though not like those faced by Paul, Jeremiah or Bonhoeffer, Queen Anne Lutheran Church has its obstacles too. How is God present to us? I believe in *at least* three ways—these ways bring God’s love into the world, they incarnate God, they make God real and they presuppose the power of God working through us.
5. God is the beyond in the midst of life—may you recognize His presence around you, and may you be empowered by it to live for others, serve and persevere.