

Grace Lutheran Community, 28 May 2023: Pentecost

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The sermon text for today is based on the text  
Acts Chapter 2 verses 1 to 21

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Who enjoys a celebration? A birthday party? Today the day of Pentecost we celebrate the birth of the church of God. The gift of God's own spirit it given to His church to begin growing in faith and in number. That work continues now among us by the power of the Holy Spirit through the word of God planted in us, Jesus Christ.

We are called to live out our faith in our every word and action so others in the world can see Jesus in us and hear in their own language the good news of God in Jesus Christ.

That good news, the gospel is good news to us and it is certainly good news to those who have not heard and live not in the light but in darkness still captive to a life of self and sin. Turning to everything else for life rather than to the one who made them. We too fall short of the glory of God and fall into living for self often. We put God on the back burner and get on with our lives for ourselves, worrying about what must I do for happiness and success and honour or what must I do to get ahead in this life easily forgetting what God has already done for you and for me and for all through the gift of His only Son Jesus who suffered and died for our sins. As we believe in Jesus we have life, eternal life, forgiveness of sins and salvation.

But notice what happens on the day of the very first Pentecost, the day the church came to life.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven

and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

As Pentecost was a Jewish celebration marking 50 days after Passover and the giving of the Torah or the law and a time of giving first fruits to the temple those gathered would not have been unusual.

But it was here that God pours out His spirit upon the disciples not as a gift for themselves but as a gift for those outside the Jesus group.

What a gift the Holy Spirit is as everyone there hears in their own language the wonders of God.

What are you called to do? What a gift you have been given, what a wonderful gift we all are given, the Holy Spirit. Remember Saint Paul reminds you that you are a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in you a free gift of God for what purpose?

Jesus reminds us that He will ask the Father and the advocate, the counsellor, the Holy Spirit will come.

In John 14 Jesus says, 'But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'

The Holy Spirit keeps us in the truth, in Jesus. The Holy Spirit through the word of God convicts us of our sin and drives us to the foot of the cross crying out you are forgiven by the blood of Jesus, you are free. By the Holy Spirit you are set apart, made holy or sanctified for the work of God.

The gift of the Holy Spirit in us empowers us to connect with others. We are connected today and always by the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in God's love which we are filled with by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

So we are filled with God's love, and filled by God Himself to connect with others, to speak in their native tongue whether that be in human language using words or in actions that speak of God's love to anyone.

You see God didn't give birth to His church for the sake of serving itself but serving each other, especially those who do not yet know of the wonders of God's work through His only Son Jesus on the cross.

What a reason to celebrate for us when one of those who is outside the church hears the very word of God and calls on his name to be saved. What a joy for the sinner who repents and joins us all as forgiven sinners whose names are written in the book of eternal life.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken

by the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Let us by the power we have received by the gift of the Holy spirit to live boldly by faith and ask God to bless us as we connect with those around us giving us an opportunity to speak the language of others so they too may hear and see the wonders of God in us. Let us live and speak and share the deep love of God in our lives walking with Jesus where He leads us. Amen