

Sermon for Our Saviors Lutheran Church- Pentecost Sunday 6/9/2019
Text – Acts 2:1-21

A Pentecost Hallmark Card

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a big day. Pentecost Sunday, most often called the birthday of the church. If you went looking for a Hallmark Card to send someone on this day, you would be disappointed. That's too bad, because if there wasn't a day of Pentecost, there would be no church. That's how big it is.

On this day, the Holy Spirit became a mighty wind, filling the disciples with a new purpose and direction that they had hardly imagined. That is true for you and me as well. That's how the Holy Spirit works - changing us, moving us, all towards Gods purposes.

The Spirit has moved me in many directions over the years. Years ago, I took a specialized exam to enroll in a non-neighborhood high school in the Big Apple. I made it and found myself in a school loaded with nerds all taking advanced everything. Math, science, engineering. We even had chemistry in French. My future would be set. I would be an engineer at a prestigious university that spit out engineers and rocket scientists. Kind of funny I can still recite Planks Constant - 6.62×10^{-34} joules per second. But, boom, the spirit of God blew and said no Dennis, you will work with people.

Now I am at a small Lutheran College majoring in Sociology. I became a social worker involved in the court system and psychiatric hospitals in neighborhoods like Harlem and Bed Sty in Brooklyn. Boom, God's Spirit blew at 3:00 in the morning and said no Dennis, you need to tell my story.

That Spirit moved me to The Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago where I learned to tell the story of Jesus. I became a Pastor serving congregations in Rochester and Albany, NY, enjoying Upstate NY and Saratoga Race Track. Boom, the Spirit blew and said I need to go to Appleton, Wisconsin. Great church, great ministry for 34 years. I said it was time to retire. Not so fast, said the Spirit. I have more for you to do, to tell, to touch people. Boom, the Spirit blew and I was to be

an Interim Pastor for the East Central Synod of Wisconsin. And here I am. Not knowing when the Spirit will blow again.

That's probably how it has worked for you. Not the same story, but, for sure examples of the Spirit blowing in your lives.

I remember the song from Mr. Holland's Opus - life is what's happening when you are making other plans. Maybe we should change it – life is what's happening when the Spirit changes your plans. That's the story of the disciples and us.

When Jesus rose on that first Easter, his disciples tried to grasp what it meant. Yes, he had overcome death and the grave, but what would happen next? And then when Jesus went up into heaven on Ascension Day, they were confused all over again. They recalled Jesus telling them that a helper was coming. "Wait in Jerusalem," Jesus said, "and the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, will come to guide you." Who were the disciples expecting? A guy with a briefcase and clipboard? Whatever they were expecting, they never expected this.

When the disciples were gathered together, there was a sound like a mighty wind filling the room where they were sitting. Then, tongues of fire landed on the shoulders of each, and they began to speak in strange tongues - strange languages that they had never spoken before. Here they were, Greeks, Romans, Norwegians, Swedes, Hispanics, Canadians, people from the Windy City and Cheeseheads. All could hear the story of Jesus, his life, his love for all, his forgiveness for all.

That's what this day is all about. We too are touched by his Spirit. The wind blows in our lives and tells us to go and tell the story. To everyone. Not just to the folks at OSLC in Neenah. No, to everyone.

The disciples assumed that the work of Jesus was just for the people in Jerusalem. But no, the Spirit said. Those disciples and us were, and are, called to envelope a plan to draw all people into a relationship with God.

There's a church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, that has an enormous sign right by the entrance to the church. It simply says Welcome to First Lutheran Church. But, when you leave the church you read the back of the sign. It reads, When the

Worship is over, the Service Begins. That's the work of the Spirit who calls us to GO, to GO and feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and to tell those whose lives are hard that there is a God who loves them.

So today, this Pentecost Day, feel the spirit. It's blowing. Go and make your own Hallmark Greeting Card and have it say Have a Spirited Filled Day. Give it to yourself. It's a good reminder.

Amen. Let it be so.