

Pastor Jon's Pentecost 2025 Sermon

“God is doing a new thing at Pentecost!”

Pentecost is the day in the church year that we celebrate God doing a new thing. Some refer it as the birthday of the church... the day the church went from a small group of disciples huddled inside a room out into the world to share the message of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Empowered by the promised Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Helper, the church was born, given new spiritual gifts, and sent out to the ends of the earth.

Speaking of doing a new thing, I saw God doing a new thing in our 8-year-old who just finished school this week. She was crying when I got home from work on Thursday. She was sad that school ended. She will miss her classmates, her teacher Miss K, Mrs. Martin her 1st grade teacher from last year who is retiring, Miss KC in the guidance office, her 4th grade friends that are moving on to middle school, and the friends she made on the bus. Fortunately, some parents were thinking ahead gave Marcella something to look forward to... summer birthday party invitations. But I recall a time at the beginning of the year when Marcella cried after school because some people weren't being nice to her, and she asked me if she could stay home from school the next day. This is not her. She loved school. A student was bullying her at school. After some contacts her teacher and guidance office, we came up with a plan to advocate for Marcella. Thanks to all the helpers and advocates at school, her tears are now from grief because school ended. God sends helpers everywhere in our lives.

When the Holy Spirit arrived, it wasn't some joyful, gentle thing, but it sounded like the rush of a violent wind. A whoosh. Then tongues of fire rested on each and **every** person present. Luke tells us that all in the house were filled with the Holy Spirit. Then the scene suddenly changed to the disciples getting out of the building. And the Spirit gave each person the ability to speak in a new language that people could understand. I like call it the miracle of Rosetta Stone. People could hear the story of Jesus in the native language of each. I love

how the Spirit landed on each of them. Peter, who was whooshed outside with the others, interpreted this moment as a fulfillment of the prophet Joel 2:28ff That on the day of the Lord, the Spirit of God would be poured out on all flesh. Young and old, male and female, slave and free ordinary people will now have the ability to be prophetic... to dream dreams and see visions. The day of Pentecost is a day to celebrate the inclusiveness and expansiveness of God.

Isn't that the challenge of the church still today... to translate the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, in a language everyone can understand. A language that makes sense to you and has meaning that you can apply to your life. What is the Gospel to a teenager today who may be struggling with a whole variety of things? It is the language that you are enough and beloved as is... that you are uniquely created and gifted by the Holy Spirit to be you and do you. You don't have to compare yourself to others, because God made you exactly the way God intended for you to be. But the world tries to tell us otherwise. What is the Gospel to an elderly person? That the aches and pains, trials and tribulations you are now facing don't compare to the eternal weight of glory prepared for you waiting in heaven for you. But you have the promise that Jesus says I will be with you to the end of the age. Or come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Or when we die, Jesus has prepared a place for you and will come again and take you to himself. Or my favorite, nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus... nothing you do or the world does to you can separate you from God's love in Jesus. Romans 8.

The Holy Spirit is still alive and loose in the world today. We receive the promised Holy Spirit in our baptism. The Holy Spirit gathered us together today in Christian fellowship to hear the Word and receive the sacrament. You could have been elsewhere today. As Isaiah 55 says, "As the rains fall down from heaven to water the earth, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose." God's word has the power to do a new thing in us, and it never goes out and returns

empty according to Isaiah 55. As Luther said in the explanation of the 3rd Article of the Apostle's Creed: The Holy Spirit is still Calling us, gathering us, enlightening us, and sanctifying us and the whole Christian church on earth, and keeping us united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

What does Pentecost have to do with my life today? If the Holy Spirit is the main actor in the church ... the engine that drives the train of the church... and sometimes it is in front of the train... sometimes in the middle... or sometimes in the back pushing the church where God wants it to go. It is our job to discern where is the Spirit calling us today... both as individuals and as a church? It is calling us today to think critically about the world's problems in light of Jesus teachings and the Gospel. The Holy Spirit empowers all voices, young and old, men and women, slave and free. In other words, the Spirit loves diversity. What voices are we not listening to in the church? How much do we learn from the awesome questions and wisdom of children? How can we embrace the radical hospitality of the Holy Spirit. Where is the Spirit calling us as individuals with our unique gifts and talents? What is the Holy Spirit calling you out of and calling you into? How is it calling you to change or repent from in your life?

Finally, as Jesus said in the Gospel, I will not leave you orphaned. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you." This comforts me to know that I don't have to have it all figured out, but the Holy Spirit will teach me all I need to know through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Come Holy Spirit come. Keep pushing us where we need to go. Amen.