

## **Pentecost Sunday, May 28, 2023**

**Pentecost is a sign of a new beginning for the church!** The lovers of Jesus had followed him for 3 years. They saw the life of God in him. Some were there at his baptism – they witnessed his ministry of healing and restoring – they were astonished at his transfiguration, behoved by his suffering and dying – they rejoiced at his victory over death in the resurrection – and saw his union with God in the Ascension. They lived the life of Jesus with him.

And in an intentional sense so do we – we experience this journey of life, death, and new life – order, disorder, re-order.

**In the church we follow the life of Jesus in the liturgical calendar.** This year – the year of St. Thomas' 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary the church calendar has our picture on the front cover! A thank you to Nancy for submitting this. If you don't yet have one there are a few left in the Narthex – please take one to follow the seasons and colors of the church. In it you will see where the church begins in the waiting with Mary through Advent (blue) – to the Christmas coming of joy and salvation (white, gold) – to Jesus' baptism – through his vibrant ministry and preaching and transfiguration – and into the lonely desert of Lent (purple), the hopeful parade of Palm Sunday through Holy Week to the Cross (red)– to the garden of the empty tomb – then, into the resurrection (white/gold) and then the resurrection appearances – to the Ascending of Jesus to the Father – to waiting for another advocate to come.

Jesus said, wait in Jerusalem **to be clothed with power from the Holy Spirit.**

This power or energy from God is necessary for Jesus' followers to live out this same Life of Christ – to follow this Way of Love. It's now their turn... It is now OUR turn to live out this remarkable life of Christ. In the first 6 months of the Church year Advent – now Pentecost, November - May, God does God's part, modeling who God is and how powerful God's love is through the life of Jesus – and then the next 6 months May – November (which we liturgical communities call 'Ordinary Time'), **we live out our part** following what Jesus did in the first 6 months.

How can Jesus' friends live this beautiful, good, and true life of Jesus?

Well, as we heard today, they need to wait – wait for the Holy Spirit to come and fill them. **The life-giving Spirit will clothe them with power.** Jesus asked them to do what he did – and he gave them what they needed to do it.

We see a preview of this when Jesus first appears to his disciples in the locked room. In his first sentence he speaks in that meeting room after resurrection, he **breathes on them and says, 'RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT'** He is demonstrating and speaking out what is next... In a sense he is saying... I have lived, done what the Father asked me to do. Then I died and rose again. Now it is your turn. He breathed on them – the breath of the Resurrected One – breathed on them. He blows the wind of the Spirit – the gift of the spirit to be received. It doesn't say what happened – if they did receive or not. The point is that the Spirit – The Ruach – Breath of God is breathed out in a gentle loving breath – and then again in a mighty rushing wind.

In this God imparts God's power from on high – this is **not a politicized power – not a power that lords one's victory over others, but a power to co-suffer, to self-empty, a power to love and serve all** – even the least of these – especially the least of these. God imparts to us a power to love extravagantly as God does. To heal, to help, to be silent, to not pay back. A power to resist evil and to love one's enemies. THIS is **real** power – true power to weep with those who weep and to rejoice with those who rejoice.

The power to love one's spouse and our friends when they are cranky. The power to show up at the church to keep her going through a pandemic, or get up in the middle of the night again because the alarm went off. The power to be kind to someone who drives you crazy. And the power to forgive those who throw stones or pound nails, or... you fill in the blank...

Our part is to wait, and to receive the ever-flowing spirit of God's loving kindness and redeeming love. Breath of God,

In the Hebrew Scriptures the spirit had come upon Moses in the cloud. Moses then took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the 70 elders – and when the spirit rested upon them – they prophesied but didn't do it again. However – 2 men **REMAINED** in the camp – and the spirit rested on them such that Moses – our ancient Father of our Faith, says – "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!"

In the O T the spirit rested ON people – so the flames of fire that came on Pentecost show the spirit come – and resting on those waiting in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

What I notice is a transition from Moses, a leader – extending the spirit of God that was given to him which he gave to the people. Jesus does the same – he breathes the Holy Spirit and invites his friends to receive it.

But at Pentecost we see God now pour out the Spirit on all people and filling them! Not only resting on them – but filling them.

The Spirit moves from a cloud – to a mighty rushing wind. From prophesying IN the tent with a group of people – to many – all speaking different languages as the Spirit helped them to do so and then being sent OUT into the world to take the spirit and give it to others – it's our turn. EVERYONE who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

It was and still is – a time for an expansion – a time of inclusion – a time of invitation to ALL. Pentecost is a sign of a NEW beginning for the church. A new beginning – a new filling – a never ending filling of the Spirit come.

**In a sense today is a Happy birthday to the N T church at Pentecost.** My good friend, many of you know her, Katherine Murray, celebrated her 50<sup>th</sup> bd at a party yesterday. 50 is symbolic of The year of Jubilee! AND 50 is the meaning of Pentecost - 50 days after the death/resurrection – at Pentecost even more of the LIFE and POWER of God is poured out. And we at St. Thomas are celebrating our 150<sup>th</sup> – a triple '50' – a triple jubilee.

Something happened when Moses remained in the cloud with God and when Jesus' friends remained in Jerusalem – they were met and they carry the love and presence of God. They no longer went out nor did they speak on their own energy and power.

**May we ALSO remain** in the camp as did the two men who lingered in God's presence - Eldad and Medad – May we from time to time linger and open to the Spirit of loving power.

**May we ALSO remain** in the city, in our homes, in our church, in our lives wait and receive God's beautiful sacred breath & presence of God. God is within us and all around – **we simply breathe God in** – in each breath we take let us be mindful we breathe in God's loving presence.

**May we be filled with God's power that is beyond our own energy and capacity.**

At communion today you are invited to **light a candle as a symbol** of your consent to be filled with the Spirit and to thank God for sending the H S to us and into us.

May we trust the fire of **God to empower us to live out our lives as we follow Jesus' life** of love, self-sacrifice, and share in the life-growing work in our world.

**Come Holy Spirit and kindle in us the fire of your love.**